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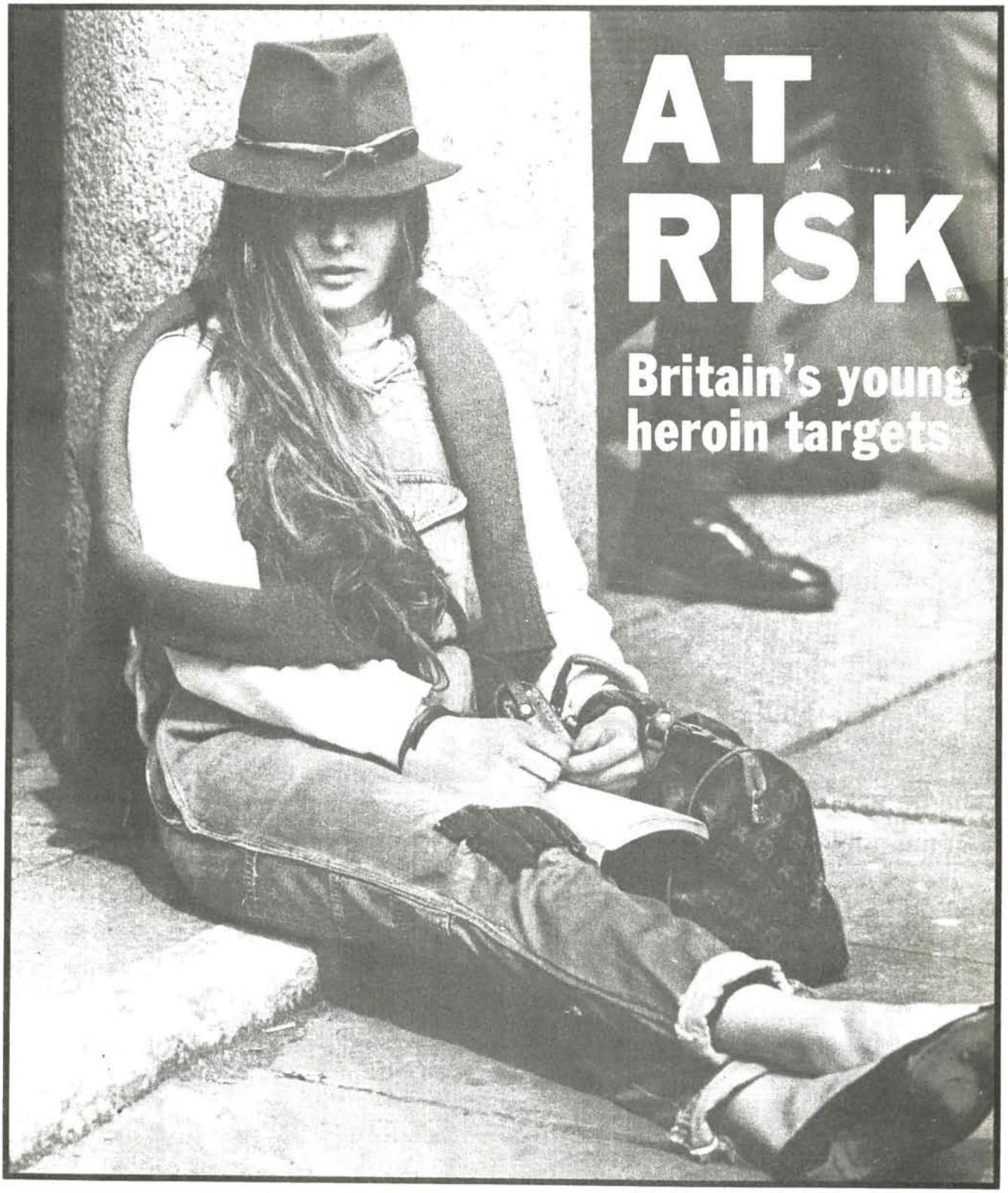
New Statesman



AT RISK

Britain's young heroin targets

PLUS: Hilda Murrell • Tory computer disaster • Fox hunting • Zimbabwe • Books • Art • Television

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New Statesman

Cover photo: David Hoffman

At Risk
Church of England field officer Kenneth Leech explains how official policies since the mid-1960s have exposed young people to an illicit market in heroin 8

NEWS 4-6

HOME

Peter Kellner: Labour's New Year nightmare 7
John Sweeney: haunting the fox-hunters 10
Rob Edwards: Scots devolution and anti-Toryism 11
Christian Wolmar: Tory computer disaster 12

FOREIGN

John Hatch: Zimbabwe 15
Chris Christensen: Turkey's media management 17

WEEKEND

Michael Comley explains what it feels like to go mad 19

BOOKS

Bob Woffinden: Britain in the 20th century 22
Stephen Romer: Poem 22
Alan Hurst: D.H. Lawrence's letters 22
Anna Coote: *Time and Tide* 23
Shorter reviews 24

ARTS

John Coleman: Films 25
Benedict Nightingale: Edward Bond's plays 26
Stephanie Jordan: *Nutcracker* 26

BACKCHAT

George Richey: Soccer refereeing 27
Naseem Khan: Work in progress goes to Hammersmith & Fulham's community play 28
Hugo Williams: Festive game shows on TV 29
Weekend competition 29
Salamanca 30

PLUS

Diary: Islander 14
Roger Woddis 14
Letters 18

NEXT WEEK

Chris Mullin on his battle for *Tribune* — Part I
Mediawatch, Slump, Feedback & Listings will all be back

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New Statesman

Vol 109 No 2807 4 January 1985

Poor omen for Geneva

THIS TIME a year ago we were having to come to terms with the fact that US cruise missiles had been deployed and were, at least in some sense, operational in Europe. The first important battle to stop this next round of escalation in nuclear lunacy had been lost.

Yet the world had not suddenly come to an end, as some of the more hyperbolic rhetoric of the anti-nuclear campaign had suggested in the closing stages of 1983. With the Thatcher government having won a landslide general election victory here in 1983 and President Reagan getting re-elected by an equally wide margin in 1984, it seemed as if the politics of arms control in the West had swung hard away from the peace movement.

Yet, even as he prepared for his second term of office, President Reagan sensed that the cold warrior, pro-nuclear element of his programme was an electoral liability, not an asset. The result was the more conciliatory note in the Reagan speeches last year and the exploratory talks between Secretary of State Schultz and Foreign Secretary Gromyko in Geneva next week.

The omens for these talks are deeply depressing. All the indications are that both the Russian and the American sides are approaching them without positive commitment. Both sides, but most particularly the Americans, are primarily concerned with the goal of not appearing to be the reason why the talks fail.

American foreign policy seems increasingly to be made by presidential speechwriters. The Reagan Administration became committed to funding a defensive missile system in space — the 'Star Wars' scheme — because a speechwriter needed some idea for the future to pad out what were thought to be inadequate arguments in favour of Congress funding the new MX missile here and now. Equally, there is no sign of any thought-out American position on what the Administration wants or hopes to get from these Geneva talks.

The new words on the President's teleprompter evidently went down well. But there is as of yet no new policy to go with them. The various elements of the American decision-making process have been asked to produce new position papers. Predictably, the hawks are still hawkish; and the doves doveish. Predictably, Secretary of State Schutz is trying to establish his status and position as the moderate in operational charge of US foreign policy. Predictably, Secretary of Defense Weinberger is continuing to get his way over commitments to fund all the new military programmes, including the 'star wars' proposal, that will make it virtually impossible for the Russians to agree to substantive negotiations. (Ominously, Ambassador Paul Nitze, who *does* understand Soviet paranoia about nuclear arms negotitions, has made it clear that he will not, as expected, lead the American professional negotiating team in Geneva.)

There is not much more evidence of flexibility on the Russian side either. The Kremlin, too, has its hawks and doves, with every indication that for the time being the aged hawks are more than ever in charge. Much has been made of the growing influence of younger rising stars, like Mikhail Gorbachev, with whom Mrs Thatcher thought she hit it off so famously last month. But the ailing Chernenko is still General Secretary, the Defence Ministry is still very much under military control and, above all, foreign policy is more than ever in the hands of the oldest old timer and hardest hard liner of them all — Andrei Gromyko.

In these circumstances there is only one chance of something positive being saved for the world out of the dance that is about to begin in Geneva. It must be made clear to both superpowers by every domestic and international channel available that failure to make substantive progress in Geneva in 1985 would be such as act of global irresponsibility that the entire pattern of East-West military and political relationships would have to be called into question by those second and third rank countries with whose nuclear destinies Moscow and Washington were playing. □

What price honour?

MRS THATCHER never made any bones about the fact that she intended to go back to the old days in the matter of dishing out honours for party political service. Back came hereditary peerages. The shires were once again showered with knighthoods. New Year 1985 is no exception. Six Tory MPs and ex-MPs duly got their 'long service' knighthoods. It all presumably helps to keep up morale on the Tory backbenches. It certainly gives the British class system another shot in the arm. Snobbery and status seeking are a central part of what is wrong with this country. The titles that lead the honours system should have no place in a modern democracy.

That said, virtually all countries have some kind of state recognition for distinguished citizens. In this country, membership of the Order of Merit, being made a Companion of Honour and being admitted to the Privy Council have all managed to preserve the quality of being something more than routine. The inclusion therefore of Sir Frederic Bennett MP in this New Year's honours list as a privy councillor requires some explanation. It is true that he has been an MP continuously since 1951, but he has never been a minister, nor made any remarkable contribution to the House of Commons as an institution, nor even to the Tory Party as such. In fact he has given his colleagues the impression that he was largely concerned with his personal business and other outside interests, which include directorships of trust companies in the Bahamas and the Cayman Islands.

Perhaps the Prime Minister could arrange, via her press secretary and an unattributable briefing of lobby correspondents, some explanation of what public, political or other service accounted for her recommendation to the Queen that Sir Frederic should join her Privy Council. □

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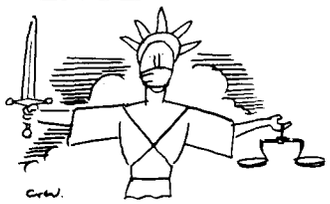
COURT CIRCULAR

WELCOME TO 1985! — in which courts will be busy with unfinished business from '84. Clive Ponting of course goes before the beaks on 28 January at the Old Bailey. But here we pick on four other courtroom fixtures which constitute signs of our times. Spilling out of the Old year, they'll be newsmakers of the New

PEACE



SEVEN of the 'Alconbury Nine' will be appearing in Crown Court this year to meet charges of 'conspiracy to commit criminal damage' — or what one of the defendants calls 'an effort to get us for thought crimes'. POLLY WOOLLEY describes what they've been facing

ALCONBURY is a USAF air-base near the Cambridgeshire/Northants border, home of various American reconnaissance and spy planes — including eighteen F-5E fighters disguised as Russian MiGs. Several short-lived attempts were made to set up a peace camp there in early 1984.

The fourth was established on 29 April by peace activists, including locals and some Molesworth peace campers. Numbers fluctuated, with many visitors and usually about 15 residents.

At 6.45 am on 20 June police arrested five people at the camp: Phil Hudson, Veronica Dignam, Paul Briggs, Paul Rudolf and David Turner — a local resident staying there overnight. Another camper, Corrie McUaith, had earlier been arrested on the base itself, and charged with criminal damage offences and — when a soldier in pursuit crashed into a glass door — with assault.

In two court appearances on 21-22 June, the six were charged with conspiracy to commit criminal damage and remanded in custody for a week, with the exception of Briggs (and later Turner). On 27 June another camper, Sybilla Snake, was arrested and charged with the same offence as she left Holloway where she had been serving a 14-day sentence for obstruction at a previous Alconbury action.

All seven appeared in court on 28 June and with the exception of Turner were bailed to Hereford, where friends had offered accommodation, on a surety of £500 apiece. Here, as Hudson says, they were virtually under 'town arrest' as they had to sign up daily at the local police station. They were later forbidden to go within one mile of USAF Alconbury.

On 4 July another camper, Roger Oakley, was arrested in Huntingdon with the words, 'I am arresting you on suspicion of an arrestable offence,' while he was supporting Molesworth Campers on a breach of the peace charge (which was dropped). Finally, another local resident, Ian Winters, was arrested on 31 July, bringing the total charged to nine.

Other local residents were threatened with conspiracy charges. One Peterborough woman, who was involved in the notorious Alconbury action of 12 May when two women were strip-searched by American personnel, was told by visiting police that she would be so charged if she went near USAF Alconbury again.

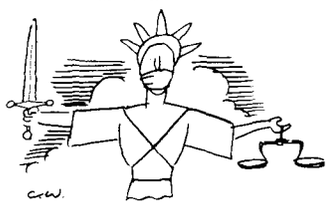
Some of the Nine also experienced police harassment. In October Oakley was involved in a serious motorcycle accident and confined to hospital for six weeks. Shortly after he returned home police arrived to arrest him for not signing on, although his injuries are still such that his committal hearing has been delayed. Again, although Winters had notified the court of his intention to move, police visited his previous address at 2.30am one morning and subsequently took out a warrant for his arrest for breaking bail conditions.

Dropped charges

The Nine appeared in Magistrates' Courts on seven different occasions before the magistrates indicated that all charges should be dropped unless the prosecution could produce evidence by 14 October. This they did, but only after the hearing, giving the defence no opportunity to study it. The magistrates accepted the defence's objections to this, and the committal hearing finally took place on 11-15 December when charges were immediately dropped against Turner and Winters, the two local residents.

Conspiracy to commit criminal damage carries a maximum of 10 years' imprisonment. The Nine claim that the prosecution has repeatedly tried to portray them as moral outsiders. Dignam says, 'They have said that our political views clash with those of this society and that therefore we would be led to break the rules of this society.' As Hudson claims wryly, 'We're not on trial for anything we've physically done. They're trying to get us for Thought Crimes.' ●

MINERS



ACCORDING to Home Secretary Leon Brittan in his notorious Worksop speech of September 1984 hundreds of miners charged with 'riot' and 'unlawful assembly' face, as he put it, 'potential life sentences' when their cases are heard in 1985. JOHN ROSE tells the tale.

THE NEW YEAR will be marked by these 'riot' trials — which could easily take on the appearance of 'show trials', especially if the strike is still on — of sometimes quite large groups of miners, involving cases arising from at least 13 alleged riots in 1984.

Police claim there were riots in 1984 at: the Mansfield Rally on 14 May; outside the Orgreave coke works on 1 June, two on 16 June and 18 June; at Rossington on 17 July; at Cinder Hill, Nottinghamshire on 25 July; at Harworth Sutton at Ashfield on 7 August, 8 August and 16 August; at Port Talbot on 29 August and 2 September; and finally on 1 October at Manton, Nottinghamshire.

Brittan's Worksop speech was denounced at the time by Gerald Kaufman, the Labour shadow home secretary, as 'monstrous' and a blatant bid to tell the courts how to sentence the miners.

Defence lawyers are pointing out that while the charges of riot are

Continued on p.6

Trafalgar Sq picketing row bubbles on

TENSIONS between the long-established Anti-Apartheid Movement and newer pressure groups rumble unresolved into the New Year. CHRISTIAN WOLMAR reports

The weekly pickets at the South African embassy in Trafalgar Square are fun. You get lots of singing and signing, an instruction sheet which tells you not to talk to the police and an enthusiastic reception from passers-by. But you still don't get the Anti Apartheid Movement (AAM)'s seal of approval.

The AAM has asked its City group, which organises the pickets, not to carry on with them (*NS* 26 October) and that decision was re-iterated in December when the AAM refused to take into membership the South African Embassy Picket Campaign, a spin-off from the City group which successfully fought off police attempts to ban the pickets.

The AAM's decision was ratified by a 2-1 vote of the 700 people who attended the organisation's AGM in October. But Carol Brickley, convenor of the City group, is unrepentant: 'Those people were mobilised by a press campaign in the *Guardian*, *Times* and *Morning Star*, and fooled by red scare stories. The pickets are incredibly successful at drawing attention to the South Africa issue. There are similar demonstrations taking place in the USA at the embassy there, and Bishop Tutu has endorsed these tactics.'

When the *NS* approached the AAM to ask the reason for their disapproval of the embassy pickets, executive secretary Mike Terry refused to comment: 'It's an internal matter within the AAM. We don't want to say anything that will make it more difficult to resolve differences as we're anxious to avoid doing anything detrimental to the liberation struggle in South Africa.'

Carol Brickley, however, retorts that clearly AAM spokespeople *did* talk to the national press for the substantial articles that appeared in the national press in October, in the week before the AGM. 'Our mass action tactics have been shown to be successful but are condemned by the AAM leadership. That's the real issue but they've painted it as a red scare. Yet the response we get on the picket from the public is amazing. We wouldn't do it if it were demoralising.'

The City group wrote before Christmas to the AAM setting out their reasons for continuing the action. Meanwhile, the Friday evening pickets continued through the holiday period. ●

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HILDA MURRELL MYSTERY STILL INTENSIFIES

JUDITH COOK, who in the *NS* of 9 November first brought wide-scale public attention to the unresolved questions about the death of Hilda Murrell (see also *NS* 14 December) perceives no let-up in the mystery despite the Home Office's flat denial last Friday (28 December) that British Intelligence had any involvement

THE INFORMATION ON Hilda Murrell's death given to the House of Commons on 20 December by Tam Dalyell MP, during the Consolidated Fund debate, is said to have come from a senior source. It appears that two intelligence officers were involved in the break-in of her house prior to her murder, and that the decision to search that house was taken at a fairly low level.

Murrell — what became of her?

Dalyell says it's possible that senior officers and Ministers may well not have been informed of what was intended. He also confirms that it's understood there was never any intention on the part of those who broke in of killing Miss Murrell. Her death, the allegation goes, was accidental when she came home unexpectedly and disturbed them in their search.

There's now to be a government inquiry into the case although just what this will bring to light is hard to see since the security services are virtually unaccountable to anyone. There's been an almost total lack of co-operation between the Special Branch and the House of Commons Select Committee looking into their activities, while there seem to be no checks at all on the activities of MI5 and MI6.

One interesting sideline is that it appears that Buckingham Palace has expressed an interest in the affair owing to Miss Murrell's connections with rose growing.

Commander Green, the former naval intelligence officer in the Falklands war who never, at any time, passed on any documents or letters or papers to his aunt is still convinced that the primary motive for the break-in was his aunt's anti-nuclear activities. He himself is following up several trains of enquiry including a suggestion that a poacher had been in the copse before the body was found — who might know if the body had been there before it was discovered on the Saturday morning (24 March 1984).

When Commander Green questioned local police after the Inquest as to why they hadn't taken any evidence from the alleged poacher, local police said they knew nothing of the matter and that the local force had not questioned any such man. ●

Coming in? Cough up £10

AS OF this week (1 January) applicants for entry clearance to the UK are for the first time being charged for entry certificates. The fee is to be £10. Such unprecedented action by the government — introduced by statutory instrument under the Consular Fees Act 1980 [as the Consular Fees (Amendment No 3) Order] on 19 December 1984 — has been vehemently opposed by, amongst others, the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association and Members of Parliament.

There was no consultation whatsoever with outside bodies before the measure was announced to Parliament by Sir Geoffrey Howe during the overseas aid debate of 22 November. Worse, despite repeated efforts by Max Madden MP to raise the issue on points of order in the Commons, the charge has been introduced without Parliamentary scrutiny or debate.

The imposition of this £10 fee represents e.g. about 30 per cent of the average annual income of a family in rural Bangladesh. Its introduction will compound resentments already felt by members of ethnic minority communities.

Rick Scannell

Rick Scannell is a member of the executive committee of the Immigration Law Practioners' Association launched last July.

MISCELLANY

All Greek to Charlie

As the *Daily Universal Register* (DUR) currently posing as *The Times* celebrates its 200th anniversary we get the goods on editor Charles Douglas-Home. This one concerns the obvious cock-and-bull story about Greece the paper ran on 4 December, by an economist called Nicos Devletoglou. The article asserted that when in exile in 1974 president Karamanlis of Greece met Turkish prime minister Ecevit outside Paris to do a deal that led directly to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, and subsequent downfall of the Greek junta. Not a shred of evidence was produced. It's the equivalent of a suggestion that Heath connived with Galtieri in a Montividео suburb to bring about the invasion of the Falklands in hopes of toppling Thatcher. Devletoglou was a known supporter of the junta and has campaigned for an amnesty for the dictators and return of the Greek monarchy. Was the *DUR* just duped by Nicos, who has knocked on the door of every paper in London? No. Charlie, it turns out, in fact consulted people who know about these things and was told who the gorgeous touting Nicos is. He still printed. *Times* change.

NS New Year scoop

A document concerning former Lieutenant Narendra Sethia, the records officer on the submarine that sank the Belgrano, *has been passed to*

Characters (in order of appearance)	
MOLE	N. G. BRUCE
WATER RAT	D. G. CHILTON
MR. BADGER	N. SETHIA
TOAD	D. M. BROWN

the NS *by a well-placed source. It records his appearance as Badger in a production of Toad of Toad Hall at Copthorne preparatory school in 1966. What we want to know is: Why wasn't he Mole? Has there been a cover-up? Who gave A A Milne his instructions?*

Identity charade

Driven from our favourite crossword by Charlie's antics with *The Times* we take the *Sydney Morning Herald* these days. We're indebted to it for a line of thought which will deeply interest the Metropolitan police press office in London. Inspector Les Thurgood, ethnic liaison officer of the New South Wales flatfoots, gives it as his opinion that those of his fellow officers who call immigrants 'wogs, slopeheads or gooks' aren't necessarily racist. 'It's a convenient method of identifying groups of people', he says.

Publish & be damned

Beware of praise in large circulation magazines, lest there be a horse laugh

Pinioned between *Fortune* and men's eyes — Big Mac

a few years later. A reader has been leafing through back-numbers of *Fortune* and finds — 26 March 1979, which just happens to be a few weeks before Maggie moved into Downing St — a glowing account of a well-known industrialist in a *Business Hall of Fame* series. His '...career has been spent in foreseeing the needs of people, in reducing the costs of meeting those human needs, and in developing a managerial style that depended on teamwork and consensus, not on arbitrary power. [His] international reputation as an executive is based more on his skill in human relations than on engineering'. Further: 'If you don't persuade your people, you haven't done anything'. Yes. Ian MacGregor. Wonder if Thatcher still subscribes to *Fortune*....

Ana Gram clowns (II)

Freelance financial journalist Nigel Lawson, writing in the *Sunday Times* on 30 December about his doppelgänger the Chancellor, promised a 1985 'Budget for jobs'. *NS* readers weren't impressed. As one person you have written in gleefully to point out that rearranged Nigel Lawson spells WE ALL SIGN ON. 'Gives you the creeps, doesn't it?' comments Diana Laurillard of NW6, who was so delighted that she wrote twice. 'Wangle loins' was contributed by both Gerard Morris of Teddington and Kate Marks (who has taken to signing herself Make Traks) of Highgate. The 'Wordsmiths of Manchester Square' once again sent dozens, climaxing with the remark: 'As a result of these terrible anagrams Lawson has been forced to declare "NS now ilegal" (*sic*)'. Pam Lavrance and Ian Saville, socialist conjurer ('Magic for Socialism!'), adding Rt Hon and MP, produce a late-night scene at the Treasury: 'Ranting lone howls'. B. Morris of N10 notices Lawson trudging towards the Carlton Club: 'Shop-worn gent in Mall'. And from the Common Room of the Town Hall Oxford Katherine Bradley, Carole Roberts, and Nigel Thomas give Lawson the coup de grace with 'Wage? Nil, son'. Golly you're good at the Tories. Now, how would you like to work your anagramagic on — um — Leon Brittan?

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Contd.

going to be extremely difficult to prove, the *effect* of bringing the charge is to paralyse the activists even before the cases begin.

A defence lawyer has described this in the following graphic terms:

'The prosecution really don't give a damn if the cases are thrown out. The point is that the prosecuting process itself has a self-justifying action. All they have to do is make the arrest, charge riot — a word carrying all the connotations of an offence of extreme gravity — and the whole unwieldy procedure grinds on in the most slow-moving and oppressive way designed to crush the defendant before the case even begins.

'Although in the end the acquittal will indeed be a vindication of the person's innocence, it can never repay the months of anxiety and restriction.'

Mysterious climb-down

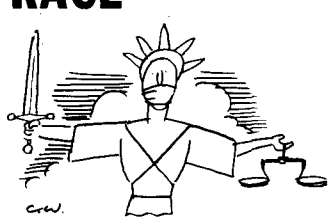
This view seems to be borne out by the one cluster of riot cases already heard in 1984. Or rather not heard. For on Monday 17 December charges of riot and unlawful assembly, brought against 22 miners in Derbyshire, were mysteriously withdrawn three months after they were imposed.

Keith Millward was one of the alleged 'rioters'. A calm, conscientious man, his main concern had been the running of the Chesterfield Strike Centre, with responsibilities like helping to sort out rent arrears and difficulties with the DHSS for fellow miners and their families.

But with the riot charge came one of those bail conditions, a draconian curfew which only allowed him to go to his welfare committee between 6pm and 9pm on a Thursday evening.

'I was a prisoner in my own house!' he says. 'I couldn't go within half a mile of the strike centre. If I was tempted to go then they'd jump on me.' ●

RACE



A CASE due to come up on 25 February at Manchester magistrates court, is likely to become a milestone in the police's relationship with the black community. AMRIT WILSON describes it.

IT INVOLVES accusations not only of police violence and harrassment but unprecedented allegations of rape in a police cell. On the evening of 19 April last year, as has now been widely publicised, 20 year old Jackie Berkley and three other young black women were arrested after an alleged street disturbance and taken to Moss Side Police Station. Jackie Berkley claims she was then taken to a single police cell, stripped naked, racially abused and raped by first one policeman and then another while two policewomen held her down and forced her legs apart.

She claims she passed out in the process and when she regained consciousness she was again abused and assaulted. Jackie was held in custody the whole of the next day and taken to court only on Saturday morning. She was charged with assaulting the police and criminal damage — tearing police shirts. (However her solicitor Ruth Bundey points out the police made no objection to unconditional bail).

Unable to speak

Jackie, not surprisingly, had no solicitor of her own and her state of mind was such that at first she refused to see the solicitor found for her by her family. When she did eventually, and with great difficulty, speak to a solicitor, she didn't speak of a rape. And although she was taken to hospital for her injuries it was not till 24 April, when she was talking about physical assaults made on her at the police station, that she was able, she says, to speak of rape at all.

(Such a delay in being able to talk about a rape experience is extremely common. According to Jenni Hall, one of the founders of the Rape Crisis Centre, when the centre opened 'we had cases of women who had not been able to talk about their rape for years. Not only because it is hard to come to terms with the fact that you have been violated but because you have to deal with an enormous number of emotions and decisions at a critical time.')

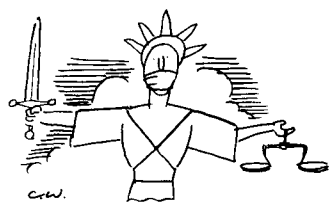
On Saturday 28 April Jackie finally made an official complaint against the police about the way she had been treated at the police station. An investigation started, led by Chief Superintendent Glover and Chief Inspector Berkenshaw of Y division. It lasted 5 months and included three identification parades in which Jackie picked out three of her alleged assailants from about 500 police officers.

The investigation ended with Jackie — already charged with assaulting the police, damaging police property and threatening behaviour — being additionally charged with making a false complaint and wasting police time.

The Jackie Berkley Defence Committee held a well-attended public meeting last month and are asking for support in their campaign 'to find out what really happened at Moss Side Police Station'. ●

Messages of support to Jackie Berkley Defence Committee, 38 Haydn Avenue, Moss Side, Manchester 14.

GAYS



THIS MONDAY (7 January) all the directors and a member of staff of Gay's the Word bookshop in London's Bloomsbury go before Clerkenwell magistrates court on charges of conspiring to evade prohibitions on importing 'indecent and obscene' material (NS 23 November 1984). MARIE STAUNTON, Legal Officer of the National Council for Civil Liberties, describes the mess made by the existence of different sets of 'morality' laws

INDECENCY is in the eye of the beholder, but when that eye belongs to the Commissioners of Customs and Excise the results suggest a very odd squint. In the 1970s, the Customs not only confiscated copies of the works of T. Rowlandson, R.A.- even though the 'indecent' originals were hanging in Windsor Castle, but also managed to seize books such as 'Rape of the Coastline' (a study of soil erosion) on the grounds of indecency.

In 1985 the Commons Home Affairs Select Committee will be looking at the curious effects of the 19th Century law that allows imported articles to be seized because they are alleged to be *indecent* while the same goods can be produced with impunity within the country because they are not *obscene*. The Victorians' 'Society for the Suppression of Vice' may not have succeeded in abolishing sin, but its activities did lead to a spate of legislation aimed at stopping the display, posting or import of indecent material.

This included the Customs Consolidation Act 1876*, which prohibits the import of 'indecent or obscene prints, paintings, photographs, books, cards, lithographic or other engravings, or any other indecent or obscene articles'.

Obscenity has been defined as 'tending to deprave and corrupt'; indecency is the lesser offense of 'shocking, disgusting and revolting' — described by Judge Sir Robert McGarry as a 'subjective and emotional' term which 'contains little of that precision so desirable in the criminal law'.

Unsatisfactory as the Obscene Publications Act was shown to be in the 1970s obscenity trials there are at least defenses to the charge of obscenity (such as artistic merit) which are not available to those accused of importing 'indecent' articles. Customs officials have powers of search and seizure which are wider even than those given to the police in the new Police and Criminal Evidence Act. A writ of assistance is granted to the Commissioner of Custom and Excise by the sovereign at the begining of every reign. It empowers officers to enter *any* building if they reasonably expect that anything liable to forfiture is kept there.

In 1983-4 the Customs used their powers to seize the remarkable total of 170,921 'indecent and obscene' articles — almost treble the total just three years ago.

Inhibiting costs

After seizure the importers are served with a notice stating that the goods will be forfeit unless Customs and Excise receive an objection within one month. An objection leads to a hearing in front of magistrates or a High Court judge — sitting with or without a jury — who will decide whether the goods are indecent or obscene and can order their destruction. The legal expense of such a hearing may lead importers to choose not to challenge the seizure.

However, they will have not be able to avoid a hearing if one of the battery of criminal offences contained in the Act is used against them. There is a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment or a fine of three times the value of the books, for those importing, assisting to import or harbouring or concealing indecent articles. An agreement, albeit even a 'nod and a wink', to smuggle such goods can lead to additional charges of conspiracy.

If it's desirable to take action against hard core pornography being smuggled into this country inside bacon lorries from Denmark (R. v. Waterfield) this can be more reliably done by using the test of 'obscenity'. Even William Lambard who drafted the first Obscene Publications Bill in 1580 (to stop those who would let in the 'main sea of wickedness' and 'set up an art of making lascivious ungodly love') would surely not maintain that something is wicked by reason of its being imported, but acceptable by virtue of its being homemade. ●

*As amended by the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979.

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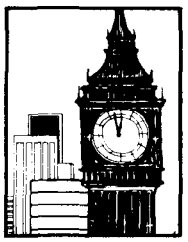

PETER KELLNER

A New Year look over Labour's precipice

ABOUT A MILLION years ago — as a matter of fact it was just before Christmas, but it seems like pre-history — an old friend remonstrated with me about my last column. 'You're very optimistic', he said, in a tone of voice that indicated that optimism about Labour's prospects was at best misguided and at worst certifiable.

Since my friend is intelligent, active and sane (qualities that often appear in pairs, but only seldom show all together in the same person), this comment worried me. True, I had portrayed Neil Kinnock as a sort of political superman, seeing off Arthur Scargill, David Owen and Margaret Thatcher, and, as difficult, just about surviving 15 rounds in the ring with Brian Walden; but the point of this reverie was essentially serious, and not intended either to convey or induce any optimism whatsoever. In order to avoid starting the New Year with any misunderstanding, I shall spell out the point as plainly as I can in words of no more than five syllables.

Labour is in terrible trouble. During 1985 its condition could become terminal — not in the sense of its final destruction, but as a political organisation with the staff, finances and potential public support capable of winning a general election at some point in the next ten years. The party is in real danger of being reduced to permanent third place in British politics, where it may be reasonably sure of (say) 150 seats in Scotland, Wales, the North and racially-mixed inner-city seats in the Midlands and London, but few hopes of winning anything else.

That fate *is* avoidable. It remains more likely that Labour will win more votes, and many more seats, than the Alliance at the next general election. But Labour's position as the main non-Conservative force in British politics is now more precarious than at any time since the birth of the SDP.

In my pre-Christmas column I offered a scenario in which all comes right and Kinnock's troubles dissolve by the time the daffodils appear. Here is an alternative scenario — *not* a prediction, simply a possible course of events.

The miners' strike, whenever and however it ends, fuels further dissent inside the party. Kinnock is challenged for the leadership. He is not in any danger of defeat, but the *process* of the contest — with his challenger appearing at trade union conferences and the media becoming obsessed by the conflict — does enormous harm. Left-wing constituency parties select candidates who oppose Kinnock, a process that is remorselessly logged by Fleet Street. The trade unions are sidetracked from their campaign to win ballots to keep their political funds. As a result, most unions, on a low poll, vote to go non-political. The party faces both political and financial ruin.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives face problems of their own. Unemployment refuses to fall, the Lords dismember the Bill to abolish the GLC and the metropolitan counties and various wets talk more and more about challenging Mrs Thatcher. The Alliance makes some spectacular by-election gains at the Tories' expense. By the end of 1985, the Alliance is leading in the polls, having separately gained support from both disenchanted Tory and despondent Labour supporters.

IF THIS IS HOW 1985 works out, it might look like a re-run of 1981, when the Benn-Healey deputy leadership contest coincided with Tory unpopularity and the creation of the Alliance to generate a giant, centrist protest-vote.

In fact 1985 is unlikely to be as bad for the Tories as 1981, but could be worse for Labour. Four years ago the rate of growth of unemployment was far greater than anything we are likely to experience this year. Then, many Tories believed it would be impossible to win another general election unless unemployment was well below 3 million and falling. 1983's general election demolished that belief. While all sorts of tensions may well afflict the Tory party, and sundry short-term embarrassments rain down upon it, Mrs Thatcher will remain in charge unless she chooses voluntarily to go — something she shows no signs of doing for some years.

On the other hand, a bad 1985 for Labour could be far more disastrous than 1981. This is partly because of 1981: that is, the party only narrowly survived that terrible year as a credible force; I doubt whether it could survive a second such experience. But that is not all. In 1981 there was no imminent threat of trade unions voting to disaffiliate from Labour. Now there is. In 1981 three or four million Labour supporters may have considered deserting the party for the Tories or the Alliance, but they had not actually done so in the polling booth. Now they have. At the start of 1981 Labour needed to gain only (!) 58 seats to form a government. Now it needs 117.

The more important difference concerns the potential dynamics of a fresh Alliance breakthrough. I recall how this column irritated Labour supporters by logging the Alliance's gains in local council by-elections — and then irritated Alliance supporters by analysing polling evidence that showed how shallow that vote was.

Even at its peak, when Bill Pitt (remember him?) won Croydon North West and Shirley Williams (remember her?) won Crosby, the Alliance possessed a fragile, unreal quality: it was new, it was fresh, it was a hype. To many people the SDP was their 'ideal' party — whatever that 'ideal' was. You want a return to the Labour Party of Gaitskell? Vote SDP. You hanker for Rab Butler's Conservatism? Vote SDP. You repudiate the old politics and want something completely new? Vote SDP.

That all-contradictory-things-to-all-voters appeal contained the seeds of its own destruction. Even before the Falklands War, which wiped the Alliance off our TV screens, its support was waning. However, if the Alliance makes gains this year — as the polls and local elections showed it beginning to do towards the end of last year — that increased support is likely to be more solid. The Alliance now possesses a reasonably clear image, not least because of David Owen's performance as SDP leader. That image has little to do with precise policies, but neither did Mrs Thatcher's image in either 1979 or 1983.

What might happen, then, if the Alliance does have a good 1985? Taking a broad average of the December opinion polls, the parties start the year with the Conservatives at 40 per cent, Labour at 33 and the Alliance at 25. Suppose Labour does badly in the wake of the miners' dispute and sheds five points to the Alliance. Suppose the Tories also shed five points as attention switches back to unemployment. We would then have the following pattern: Conservatives 35 per cent, Alliance 35, Labour 28.

That would be bad enough, but I fear worse would follow. If Labour remains in third place for any length of time, and particularly in the context of widespread union votes to disaffiliate, the prospect of Labour looking like a failed, burnt-out party would grow. Even at 28 per cent — the level of support Labour achieved in 1983 — between a third and a half of the party's support owes more to sentiment and past loyalty than to any firm belief in socialism. If Labour looked like running third, it could quickly fall to its baseline support of around 20 per cent, a figure from which it might never recover. The Alliance would then be clearly established as *the* alternative to the Conservatives; and while the short-term result would be another Conservative victory in 1987 or 1988, the longer-term consequence could be Dr Owen as Prime Minister by the mid-1990s.

To repeat: that is a possibility, not a prediction. It remains more likely that the Alliance will win fewer than 30 seats at the next election — and Labour at least 250. But this cannot be taken for granted; and 1985 is likely to determine whether Labour keeps its balance or topples over the precipice.

Have a Happy New Year — if you can. □

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LEAVING IT TO THE MARKET

Kenneth Leech retraces the little-known history of official policies towards heroin, which have set the stage for the current 'epidemic' of addiction

David Hoffman

'Snorting' powdered heroin: illicit powder (as opposed to legal tablets) was first detected in Britain in 1966

UNTIL ABOUT 20 years ago, heroin was widely regarded as a benign drug, its abuse restricted to a negligible handful of people, its use easily controlled by the medical profession. Although the damage inflicted by heroin today has been vastly exaggerated in some quarters — just as that inflicted by more respectable drugs has been played down — there is no boubt that heroin abuse and its side effects are now helping to destroy many lives. Heroin has also introduced both networks of petty crime and very powerful professional criminal gangs into society.

I do not want to argue that Britain's 'heroin problem' could have been avoided altogether. But its extent and its ramifications could certainly have been significantly curtailed had not successive governments and the clinics in effect forced the distribution of the drug entirely on to the illicit market. To understand how this has happened we need to go back to the 1950s and 60s, from the time when most heroin was supplied, and therefore controlled, by doctors through prescriptions, and manufactured here legally, under licence, by pharmaceutical companies such as Parke Davis and British Drug Houses.

The spread of heroin abuse from the older communities of 'therapeutic addicts' to the emerging world of the new-style 'junkies' began in the early 1950s. On 18 February 1955 the Home Secretary announced that licences to manufacture heroin would not be renewed after the end of the year. But this proposal met with what Arnold Trebach, in *The Heroin Solution* has called 'a virtually solid front of British medical support for heroin'. It was, in the memorable words of the British Medial Association at the time, a 'most excellent sedative'. What is interesting is that much of the opposition to a ban was based on social, not medical, grounds. It was the legal availability of heroin, the doctors argued, which kept the Mafia and other criminal syndicates at bay. Ban the manufacture of heroin and the black market would take over. Although what happened later did not amount to a ban, their central argument has been shown to be correct.

Six years later, in 1961, came the first report from the Brain committee which claimed that there was no increase or likelihood of increase in the incidence of drug addiction in Britain. (Led by Sir Russell Brain (now Lord Brain), the committee was asked to report to the Home Office and the Ministry of Health on drug addiction in the UK and the likelihood of an increase in the abuse of heroin, cocaine, morphine and pethidine.) The Home Office figures, to which this interdepartmental committee had access, showed otherwise. It was, as *Time and Tide* commented at the time, 'a smug and misleading report'. It probably helped to dull the consciousness, and prolong the inaction, of the Ministry of Health during the crucial formative years of the heroin epidemic. Two years after Brain, the American sociologist E.M. Schur, in a major study of heroin addiction in Britain and the US, claimed that the 'British system' was responsible for the marked absence of criminal syndicates. Nevertheless these were the years when the increase in addiction was occurring.

During the decade 1960-70 the incidence of heroin addiction grew by 600 per cent. The 'marked increase in the number of persons addicted to diacetylmorphine [heroin], especially in the younger age groups' was first noted officially in the government's report to the UN for 1964. In that year the Brain Committee was reconvened and published its report in 1965. The Report to the UN for that year noted a 'significant increase in the number of addicts who have obtained their drugs entirely from unknown sources', an increase from five to 77.

THERE WAS at this time little evidence of traffic in heroin which was fed entirely from illicit sources. The second Brain report in 1965 identified a small group of doctors in London as the main source. These doctors were not named, but their identity was known to everyone working in the field. A number of them are now dead. During the years following the report, the group of doctors did not stay the same. During 1966-8, when I had contact with most of them, they included several who were senile and incompetent, at least one dangerous criminal, and a number of dedicated physicians whose only crime was that they were willing to accept responsibility for caring for a section of the community whom most of their colleagues

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would not touch.

For a while the position taken by the Ministry of Health was that, on the one hand, it condemned the wicked 'junkies' doctors', whom it saw as the cause of the problem; but on the other hand it hoped that they would continue to prop up the old system until the government was ready with its new treatment centres.

However, 'the doctors' were not as co-operative as the Ministry might have wished. First of all, in November 1966, Dr Geoffrey Dymond of Fulham suddenly gave up his work with addicts. On 15 November, *The Times* printed a letter from Dr A.J. Hawes of Fitzroy Square, London WC1. Hawes warned:

> One of the prominent junkies' doctors has just thrown up his addicts' practice in the past few days. I cannot blame him, but the result has been to throw about 80 heroin and cocaine addicts on the open market which usually means the black market.... The most threatening portent is that addicts are telling me that there is plenty of the stuff to be had on the black market even though the source from overprescribing doctors is drying up. It looks as if big business which has been waiting in the wings for so long has now taken over the stage and is playing the lead. So we may look for an explosion in the teenage addict population as the months go by.

Hawes's letter is one of the earliest testimonies to the existence of powder heroin on the British scene. Heroin in its illegal form is normally powdered; when legally prescribed by doctors it comes in tablets or ampoules. He repeated his claim six months later, on 2 June 1967, in the *British Medial Journal*, which led the *Evening Standard*, on the same day, to ask 'Heroin in London — is Mafia on the move?'

The second incident was that one of the best known of the 'junkies' doctors', Lady Isabella Frankau of Wimpole Street, suddenly died in the summer of 1967. Her death and the events which followed it marked the main turning point in the heroin scene in terms of medical management. For Frankau's removal released a large number of addicts onto the market. It was at this point that Dr John Petro appeared and took over some former Frankau patients. Known to addicts as 'the barefoot doctor' Petro worked from Baker Street tube and the Picadilly toilets until he was struck off the Medical Register in 1968 on a technicality for failing to keep his drugs' register up to date. It was Petro who raised the question of irresponsible prescribing by doctors.

The pressure on the Ministry to establish the long-awaited treatment centres or clinics recommended by the second Brain report also began to intensify at this point. Claims were being made about facilities in London hospitals which could not be substantiated. On 16 July 1967 the *Sunday Times* ran a feature entitled 'The strange case of the missing treatment centres.' Not until 1968 and 1969 did clinics actually start to appear. This period was crucial for the deterioration of the illicit street market in heroin.

Dr Hawes had claimed that the gangs were beginning to dominate the street market as early as 1966-7. He was probably correct in saying that powder heroin had started to appear then, though the evidence is not conclusive, but he was certainly wrong to say that 'big business' was 'playing the lead' at this stage. However, between that time and the coming into operation of the Dangerous Drugs Act in 1968, the criminalisation of the market had developed. The journalist Alan Bestic referred to the movement of 'big gangs' into the heroin scene in an article on 9 March 1968.

PROBABLY THE FIRST report to present evidence, as opposed to speculation, that heroin was being smuggled into Britain, appeared in *The Times* on 26 March 1969. The author, ironically, was Norman Fowler, now the cabinet minister with responsibilities in this area. The illicit material, Fowler claimed, was mixed with caffeine, and was selling at 30 shillings a grain. Its source was Hong Kong.

From then onwards there were many reports of 'Chinese heroin', and from the summer of 1969 onwards the Gerrard Street area of Soho became the centre of illicit heroin traffic organised by the Hong Kong Triads. They began to fill the gap left by the policy of cutting down on heroin prescribing by the clinics, some of which continued to prescribe methadone in injectible form. (I lived a stone's throw from Gerrard Street during this period, and watched the street scene change as medical practice changed.)

For a while a number of people, myself included, believed that the clinics had 'contained' the heroin spread and that the circulation of 'Chinese' was a minor aberration which would not last long. In an article in *New Society* on 6 January 1972, Dr Peter Chapple, a very respected physician, claimed that 'there is hope that the heroin epidemic has at least been contained'. Earlier the work of Dr John Owens in Birmingham had led to descriptions of that city as 'the city that has controlled heroin addiction' (*Nursing Times*, 24 July 1969). Owens had, in fact, anticipated the controls of 1968 by restricting heroin prescribing within Birmingham to his own unit at All Saints' Hospital. And in fact there was evidence of a decline in heroin use in 1970. On 3 April 1973 an article by Simon Jenkins, reviewing my own study of the Soho heroin scene, appeared in the *Evening Standard* under the confident heading 'How we beat heroin.' But by this time the illicit market was expanding.

Observers were expressing fears that the clinics were not dealing with some addicts as early as 1969. Anton Wallich-Clifford, founder of the Simon Community which worked with derelict and semi-vagrant addicts, claimed, on 23 August 1969, that many rootless addicts were 'untouched' by the clinics. But it was not until much later that fears about the clinics' failure became articulated over a wide area. Thus Release, the drugs advisory and help organisation set up Caroline Coon and Rufus Harris in 1967 in Notting Hill, London, to advise people on drugs charges,claimed in 1976 that the clinics were too restrictive in their refusal to prescribe heroin, and that the black market was again expanding. In 1978 there was a 20 per cent increase in the numbers of new addicts notified to the Home Office, and this rose to 40 per cent in 1981. In 1980 an article in the journal of the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence claimed that the clinics were in effect long-term drug suppliers. But it was not heroin but methadone that they were supplying.

The evidence does suggest that the illicit market in heroin, and the involvement of criminal syndicates, increased in direct relationship to the policy of the clinics of rapidly cutting heroin prescribing. This was precisely what some of us had warned would happen as long ago as 1966. Indeed it was the fear that such might be the case which led to the abandonment of the heroin ban of 1955.

What has happened has not been a heroin ban, but its effect on the street scene has been the same. While it is certainly true that the junkies' doctors fed the illicit market, they also controlled it. It is at least possible that had the 'Rolleston principles' (Sir Humphrey Rolleston's 1920s recommendations to the Health minstry that there continue to be the medical freedom to prescribe heroin and cocaine for addicts under certain conditions) been maintained, with more adequate ways of dealing with irresponsible prescribing (which, incidentally, has not been reduced, simply transferred to other drugs), the dominance of the illicit market and the present uncontrolled situation might have been avoided.

In order to have a drug epidemic, three features are necessary: the availability of the drug; the existence of a vulnerable population; and the means of bringing the two together. The easy availability of illicit heroin could not have happened at a worse time for Britain's youth, when so many thousands face unemployment and hopelessness and when whole communities are in despair. For heroin is classically the drug of despair: it is a cynical irony that it is virtually the only addictive substance to decrease in price since the present government took office. Whether it is now possible, as Trebach suggests, to 'revive the Rolleston era' is open to doubt. The idea should, however, at least be open to debate. □

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Kenneth Leech is Field Officer of the Church of England's Board for Social Responsibility. This article is written in a personal capacity and does not in any sense express the views of the Board.

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FOX-HUNTING

DEEPER SHADE OF PURPLE

John Sweeney on a day out with the hunt saboteurs

THERE WAS no doubting whose side the road gangers were on. As the ladies and gentlemen of the Badsworth Hunt trooped past in their red-coated splendour one ganger, built like a Barnsley brick outhouse, bellowed at them: 'Chuffing cruel bastards'. The unspeakable trotted on through the November mist, not speaking.

By some quirk of the South Yorkshire repair roster the gangers were spectators of the efforts of the Sheffield, Huddersfield and Doncaster Hunt Saboteurs to stop the Badsworth from getting a kill. The fox-hunters went a deeper shade of purple as the sabs blew hunting horns, sprayed Anti-mate and ran amongst the hounds, leaving the fox to make his getaway, going flat-out with his brush trailed behind him across the ploughed fields.

The Badsworth is one of the oldest hunts in the north of England as well as being one of the most under threat because of the success of the sabs in spoiling their sport. The hunt cavorts round the rolling hills north of Doncaster, bounded by the A1 to the east, which it dare not cross for fear of massacring the hounds, and the pithead winding gear of Grimethorpe to the west. Even the fox-hunting fraternity is not daft enough to risk the derision of the Grimeys, still solid in the tenth month of the coal strike.

A main railway line runs a few hundred yards from where the hunt drinks the traditional stirrup cup at Stubbs' Hall Farm. The hunt had to cross the railway line by a road, the one which was being repaired by the gangers. The sight of the red-coats waiting at a red light as the navvy shovelled hot tar would have been an apt photograph for a *Soviet Weekly* article about the British class system.

While the fox-hunters defend their shrinking space of 'traditional value', the saboteurs use CB radio to organise their movements, constantly circling the pack by small country roads and tracks. Even modern policing methods help to disrupt the hunt: when re-inforcements arrived they turned out to be police support units (PSUs) straight from the picket lines. Armoured Transit vans with great sheets of metal down each side are all very well for driving at the miners, but they look a trifle odd in the middle of a foxhunt.

THE FOX-HUNTERS divide into two camps on how to deal with the sabs. One immensely fat fox-hunter, sitting astride a grey horse as big as a forklift truck, came up to the landrover loaned by the National Hunt Saboteurs Association in which I had been spending the day with the Sheffield sabs. 'Why don't you live and let live?' the extremely fat fox-hunter asked. 'Why don't you let the foxes live?' an extremely thin vegetarian sab replied. 'Why don't you do some good and go to Abyssinia?' he retorted and his horse carried him away as the sabs puzzled over this olde worlde geography.

Camera Press

'The last risk activity in Britain' according to Max Hastings

Other fox-hunters and their supporters — claimed to number 50,000 — can be less quaint. When I spent a day as a guest of the hunt one rather ferret-faced red-coat, who worked in 'scrap', hinted that he would not baulk at riding into the sabs 'if no one was looking'.

But the more thoughtful fox-hunters are wondering whether the cry of 'Tally-ho' will still be heard in a few years time. Max Hastings, the man who strolled into Port Stanley ahead of the Argie-bashers, defends fox-hunting as 'one of the great traditional country sports in Britain and one of the last risk activities'. Writing in *The Field*, the house magazine of the blood-crazed, Hastings is pessimistic about the future.

'One of the saddest changes in the last 30 years is that it has ceased to be possible to take the coming of each fox-hunting season for granted.' He warns against stupidities which reflect badly on hunting, such as the stage hunt which pursued its beast into the middle of a Devon town's shopping centre a while ago. And he ticks off hunters' behaviour towards motorists, which 'can still leave a lot to be desired'.

Hastings chooses to defend fox-hunting on strange ground: its classlessness: 'It is ironic that its enemies project fox-hunting as an upper-class activity, when today it is cheerfully middle-class, rather less elitist than many shoots, with most of the best masterships in the hands of farmers or businessmen. Whatever one may say about fox-hunters, I do not believe anybody can make the charge of snobbery to each other stick against them.' Ho-hum.

Hastings laments that the Tory party is no longer the solid bastion it was a generation ago. And if traditional values have lost their appeal, there's always *Realpolitik* as a last resort: 'It is Tory MPs who have to be reminded, perhaps forcefully, how much many field sports supporters contribute to the Party. Polite representations, in my political experience, will not be enough. Some rigorous arm-twisting will be required . . .'

If the sabs have common decency and public opinion on their side, the fox-hunters have the law, the police and the 'heavies'. My day out with the sabs started with a friendly duo of coppers chatting amiably — and ended with the same policemen threatening to 'nick' the sabs' landrover if it did not leave the area immediately.

The organiser of the Sheffield saboteurs Brendan McNally, aged 22, spent three months in jail after freeing rabbits in an Animal Liberation Front raid. It took Brendan two hunger strikes before he could get the prison authorities to accept that he was a vegetarian and give him vegan meals. Last March, 26-year-old Eddie Coulston suffered serious injuries from a blow to the head while he was attempting to disrupt a hare coursing event in Liverpool. Hunt sabs are regularly kicked and horse-whipped by the hunters.

By common consent, someone is going to be killed — sooner rather than later — trying to stop a hunt. And some animal rights activists are becoming more violent. The formation of the Hunt Retribution Squad is the latest sign of this trend. Violence against human beings by people opposed to violence against animals is the unacceptable face of animal liberation.

No one was injured on my day out with the Sheffield sabs, apart from two innocent bystanders who fell over in the mud escaping from an uppity fox-hunter — another own goal for the unspeakable. Better still, Basil Brush got away to live for another day, and the road gangers raised their spades in salute and cheered as the sabs drove past them homewards. □

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DEVOLUTION

WAITING FOR THE AVALANCHE

Rob Edwards on Labour's impotence in Scotland

THE GOVERNMENT was defeated by 37 votes to 13 at the end of a major debate at the House of Commons last month. As it marked the defence of nationalist interest, not class, it passed with almost no public comment. After a passionate argument about £90 million cutback in regional aid to Scotland at the Scottish Grand Committee, Labour, Alliance and Scottish National Party MPs combined to reject the usual procedural motion to end the debate and report it back to the full House.

This episode epitomises the key dilemma of Scottish politics. For Labour it graphically illustrates the Tories' lack of support north of the border: for the SNP it highlights Labour's impotence in Scotland. The Scottish Grand Committee is a rather peculiar parliamentary standing committee. It contains all 72 Scottish MPs — 41 Labour, 21 Tory, 8 Alliance and 2 SNP — and can thus inflict procedural defeats on the Tories. The problem is that it has absolutely no power: it is, in the words of Liberal leader David Steel, a standing joke.

But the small rebellion has put new life into the unresolved Scottish debate about devolution. Since the 1979 referendum, when Scotland narrowly voted in favour of devolution, all the political parties have had difficulties working out how to approach the issue. The arguments for and against a Scottish Assembly in Edinburgh have not exactly set the heather on fire and are never likely to, but there are now clear signs that the issue is returning to prominence.

The cross-party Campaign for a Scottish Assembly (CSA), after hammering away for several years, now at last seems to be getting somewhere. In recent months it has managed to set up a series of informal private talks between senior representatives of every major political party in Scotland except the Tories. They have met twice so far, and although they all support the need for devolution, it is going to be difficult to overcome the deep-rooted antipathy between political parties and reach any form of agreement. But at least — for the first time — they are talking.

Affiliations to the CSA are on the increase, and both Labour and the SNP have recently overcome their suspicion and decided to support the Campaign. The CSA points enthusiastically to a recent opinion poll it commissioned along with the magazine *Radical Scotland*, which suggests that 54 per cent of Scots think that the need for a Scottish Asembly is greater now than it was five years ago. 'The avalanche hasn't happened yet' says CSA convener Jim Boyack 'but it will happen soon'.

THERE IS even some stirring amongst Scottish Tories, who since 1979 have found the issue acutely embarrassing. The fresh-faced new leader of the opposition Tory group on Edinburgh District Council, Councillor Paul Martin — a national organiser in the 1979 Scotland Says Yes campaign — said recently that there was a 'substantial minority' within the Scottish Tory Party in favour of a directly-elected assembly for Scotland.

For its part, Labour has provided a consultative 'Green Paper' which goes significantly further than the 1978 Scotland Act produced by the last Labour government. It proposes extending the Assembly's powers to include responsibility for Universities and the police, as well as certain new economic powers. Crucially the Green Paper accepts the principle that any Assembly should have the ability to raise its own revenue through a 'devolved income tax system'. Inevitably, this has already provoked controversy as it could lead to higher taxes.

Labour's plans had a difficult birth; heir to all the party's conflicting opinions on the centralised State or local democracy, nationalism as bourgeois or as socialist. In the event the Green Paper seems to have successfully dampened down the row that threatened to flare after the last General Election. Elaborate plans for a lengthy series of public hearings on the proposals before a small group of Labour MPs are currently being drawn up. MPs have not ruled out the possibility of consulting with political opponents on the issue, although the signs are not encouraging. The SNP has not decided whether to respond to Labour's Green Paper

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because, it says, it has not yet formally received a copy or been asked for its views.

Paradoxically, it is the SNP which tends to find the Scottish Assembly debate most awkward. After 1979 the party swung sharply against devolution in any form, preferring the Holy Grail of 'independence nothing less'. This was true until 1983 when the annual conference passed a motion saying that it wouldn't oppose devolutionary measures — a victory for the pragmatic Left over the traditionalist Right. Earlier this year its conference agreed by a small majority to support the idea of an elected constitutional convention to determine how Scotland should be governed.

THE NATIONALIST LEFT has long identified Scotland's massive Labour vote as its priority target. To this end it has attempted to build links with the trade unions and to reorientate its industrial policies. It has not always had an easy task — on the miners' strike for example the SNP has experienced very similar, if less publicised, tensions to those in the Labour Party. But left-wingers have to be credited for persistance if nothing else. Practically every week, executive member Jim Sillars has a letter or two published in the Scottish press. All of them end with the same question: what is Labour in Scotland going to do if England votes Tory again?

Sillars — a former Labour MP who broke away to form the Scottish Labour Party and then, when it collapsed, joined the SNP — is the one person guaranteed to provoke a vitriolic response from Scots Labour politicians. Their bitterness is no doubt heightened by their awareness that his question does have some validity. But of course it is impossible for them to respond directly, as any acceptance of the question's premise looks too much like defeatism. Instead they resort to counter-attack, accusing Sillars of actually wanting a Tory victory in England and of failing to distinguish between devolution and independence.

But in private Labour MPs are willing to admit that contingency plans in the event of a Tory victory in the south must be made before the next general election. A few are even exercising their minds on the subject. They point out that the composition of the Scottish Labour Group would be different (and probably more sympathetic to devolution) as at least eight MPs in safe seats are retiring and their local parties are likely to select pro-devolution candidates. Another Tory win would make many anti-devolution Scots see Scottish independence as the only political hope.

Labour might even consider calling a special conference to form a separate Scottish party. If persuasion and disruption failed to persuade the Government to provide a Scottish Assembly, they might consult with other opposition parties to work out a strategy for forcing the Government's hand. Tactics could include a constitutional convention and resignations by MPs or councillors to cause by-elections. A major strategic division could be between those who want devolution as a matter of principle, and therefore would treat alliances with other sympathisers as a priority, and those whose overriding interest is in winning power for Labour in Scotland, for whom devolution is only a poor instrument for that end. □

SOFT-WEARING TORIES

Maggie praised them, Tory MPs financed them, the Conservative Party commissioned them. So why did Tycom computers go bust? Christian Wolmar reports

AN ENDORSEMENT from the Conservatives seems to be the kiss of death for high tech firms. A book published at the end of last year *Thatcher's Reign: A Bad Case of the Blues*, lists a string of budding electronics firms visited and praised by Mrs Thatcher, which called in receivers a few months later.

Nearer to Conservative Central Office itself the failure of the Tycom Corporation, within months of its Microframe computer being recommended by the Conservatives for use by MPs and constituency parties, has left egg on the face of a number of leading figures in the party and big holes in a few of their pockets. These include junior transport minister Michael Spicer, David (now Lord) Young, David Wolfson, Thatcher's 'chief of staff' at No 10 since 1979 and a nephew of Sir Isaac Wolfson of Great Universal Stores, and Euro-MP Sir Jack Stewart Clark.

Tycom was compulsorily liquidated following a creditors' meeting on 22 October owing £2 million to 40 suppliers and investors. Yet a company formed to buy back Tycom from the receivers by Mr Allen Timpany, the main 'brains' behind Tycom, is still being used by the Tories to service the 53 computers they bought.

Tycom started life modestly as Guestel which sold and dealt in computers. Turnover increased over ten times from £64,000 in 1980 to £650,000 in 1981, on which it made a modest profit of some £3,500. At the end of 1982, Timpany decided to take Guestel into the field of production, making a computer called the Microframe and changing the name of the company to the much grander sounding Tycom Corporation, with Sir Jack Stewart Clark MEP as chairman.

The move was launched with a £500,000 loan, fronted by County Bank, the NatWest's merchant banking subsidiary. It was put up equally by the bank, businessman Conrad Morris, and a syndicate that included David Young and David Wolfson. Young and Wolfson's involvement in the company was kept a secret at the time, with Morris holding their shares for them as nominee. Young and Wolfson were in for £70,000 each.

Extravagant claims were made by the company for both the Microframe and Tycom which were repeated uncritically in the business press. The *Financial Times* ran a story within days of Tycom's launch reporting: 'Mr Timpany has ambitious plans to sell about 10,000 systems this year. [He has] his sights on the US, Japanese and European markets' (6 January, 1983). In fact, only 450 Microframes were ever made.

In July 1983, when Tycom's suppliers were already beginning to be anxious about being paid, the *Observer's* Industrial Editor Steve Vines wrote that 'sales are expected to reach £6 million by the end of this year, a phenomenal 9,130 per cent growth rate in five years' (10 July, 1983). Hypothetical rather than phenomenal, as the Microframes had barely started rolling off the production line. 'Actually', Vines went on, 'Timpany thinks so big that he thought sales would top £13m by the end of this year [but] he cheerfully admits that this target was somewhat wide of the mark.'

The sales talk was fantasy. The Microframe was said to be different because its 'architecture' allowed the microprocessor to be changed when there were technological advances, making the machine 'future proof'. It was said to have a 'unique' facility that allowed it to run several systems using different computer languages simultaneously and to be able to run 90 per cent of all available software.

Phillip Oppenheim, the young Tory MP for Amber Valley and co-editor of a magazine *What to buy for business*, followed the Tycom hype through its press releases and Park Lane champagne launches: 'Quite frankly, Tycom made ludicrous claims. In what is already a hyped-up market, they beat everyone at it. Their press releases were dishonest and their production claims downright lies.'

His co-editor, John Derek is even blunter: 'The "future proof" concept was just bunk. What they meant was that you could change the computer's microprocessor. Since that is a major operation, involving changing your software, nobody's going to want to do it. It's as if Ford boasted that you could change the engine in their cars in five years' time when a better one is developed.'

As for being able to run most software, the shortage of compatible software and the large sums Tycom spent in developing its own software was one of the reasons behind its demise. Derek's overall assessment was of, 'at best, an average machine at a well above average price'.

Oppenheim recalls that, when Tycom was trying to sell its machines to the European Democrat group of MEPs in the summer of 1983, it still couldn't display a working version of its own machine.

THE EUROPEAN Democrats weren't taken in, but the Tory Party was. Before the 1983 election, it had been looking in what Oppenheim calls a 'rather haphazard way' for a micro-computer that could be used by MPs and constituency parties. At Oppenheim's instigation the 'Conservative computer forum' was formed — a small group of MPs and friendly computer experts — who were to look at the manufacturers' competing claims and negotiate a discounted price. It was chaired by Michael Spicer, then a party vice-chairman.

Only British-made or assembled machines

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Will Hull

were considered and, from the 30 or 40 available, a short list of four was drawn up. Oppenheim felt the Microframe shouldn't have even been on the list and was even more suprised to read in the press that Spicer had selected it. Tycom had slashed its list price by half to £2,000 for a package involving the computer, peripherals, like a printer and disc drive, and basic software.

Oppenheim thinks that Spicer was convinced he was obtaining the best possible deal. 'There was no hint of corruption. If anything, there was a bias against Tycom because of its connections. Spicer simply had a lot of trouble getting through to the right people at the other firms. It was just a bit of mismanagement.'

For his part, Spicer said on a BBC *Newsnight* programme investigating this saga: 'I didn't make it my business to look at the details of the shareholding. I didn't know who the shareholders were but that is totally irrelevant. I wasn't buying the company.' Spicer reiterated this point to the *New Statesman*, although he admitted: 'I found out about the Wolfson connection about 10 days before we went ahead with the Tycom deal, but it would have been ridiculous to pull out just for that reason. I didn't find out about David Young until the BBC told me when they were preparing their programme.'

Yet long before the Tories' deal in December 1983, Timpany had been ready to talk of a 'hot line to Maggie' and to mention the Young and Wolfson connections to try to impress Tycom's more persistent creditors.

John Diver of LDR systems, one of Tycom's software suppliers which lost £80,000 in the collapse, finds Spicer's argument unconvincing: 'There's so many sharp operators in this industry that people always assess the background of companies. It's one of the few reliable indicators there is to try to ensure that you're dealing with a firm that's going to stay around long enough to give you adequate follow-up.'

Already when Spicer was signing on the dotted line, Diver, and many others in the industry, knew the company was in deep financial trouble. A Tycom cheque to him for £28,000 had bounced in October and the company kept on making excuses about payment. 'They never gave reasons, they always talked possibilities — that this or that firm was about to sign a big contract'.

According to the *Newsnight* programme, 'between August and December 1983, bailiffs were calling at Tycom's offices on average once a week'. If the Tories had taken out routine credit checks, they would have discovered that Tycom was effectively bust. An accountant who looked at the company's books for *Newsnight* reported that by January 1984 the position was 'hopeless' and that even a year earlier the position was 'stretched', getting 'progressively worse' throughout the year.

Timpany still stands by his product and says that another manufacturer has taken over its production, though he refused to reveal its identity. But the Microframe had both teething problems and more fundamental faults. Early models overheated, there wasn't enough software and there were delivery problems. Possibly most important, the machine only came onto the market after IBM launched its Personal Computer (PC) because of the production difficulties — a fatal delay. Furthermore, the Microframe was overpriced and very heavy since the casing was made out of metal rather than plastic. According to *Newsnight's* research, ten of the original dozen dealers sold just eight machines between them and one dealer reported that 'he still wakes up screaming when he dreams about Tycom'.

Timpany says *Newsnight's* research was selective but admits that there was only one big customer apart from Central Office — THF, an old client of his, which bought 60 machines. Tycom's advertising claims that Microframes were 'at work in places like Grand Met, Smith's Industries, the Army, the Post Office and Xerox' were disingenuous — those machines were on trial as part of those organisations' hardware selection process.

Timpany is now a very chastened young man: 'I confess I was over-enthusiastic but we did nothing wrong. We were prepared to get off our butts to try and do something but it didn't work. We shouldn't be punished for it.' Indeed, his punishment had been less than that of at least one of his creditors who went bankrupt because of Tycom's debts, throwing its two partners on the dole, though he says he lost £80,000 of his own money. Seeing the end was inevitable, he resigned from the board on 28 May two weeks after Tycom went into voluntary receivership, becoming a director of Firefalcon the following day. A late rescue attempt in April which involved the Marquess of Tavistock had failed. The receiver, Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co, sold Tycom to Firefalcon a couple of weeks later for a sum, according to Roger Oldfield of Peat Marwick, 'not dramatically in excess of £105,000' — not a bad price for a company which according to its accounts had boasted stocks worth £750,000 just two months before.

Firefalcon, operating under the name Tycom Systems, is not a manufacturer of computers but services them and is developing software for the hotel and telecommunications industries. It continues to maintain the 53 machines bought by the Tories. Neither Timpany nor Spicer was clear about whether there was a contract between the new Tycom and the Tory party but obviously the party is a major customer of Timpany's.

The Tories announced legislation in the Queen's Speech to clean up business practice. Among the measures suggested in the Bill is one barring directors of compulsorily liquidated companies from becoming or remaining directors of other firms for three years. Timpany would not have been able to set up his phoenix operation under these proposals.

The debacle includes a further source of embarrassment to the Tories. Timpany attributes his failure to the competitiveness of the industry, and in particular to the problems faced by small companies fighting for the same market as IBM and other giants. Yet when she visits these industries of the future, Thatcher emphasises the role of small business as the engine of economic recovery. Timpany points to a *Sunday Times* survey which showed there are 294 British manufacturers of computers and warned that the final market place will have room for just 20 or 30. 'The rest will, like Tycom, go to the wall. I now feel its impossible for small firms to fight to for the same market as the giants. Instead, they have to aim for the pickings left by them on the periphery,' said Timpany — an ironic admission from a businessman who carried Mrs Thatcher's personal blessing. □

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DIARY

As a great admirer of his work and writing I was pleased to meet Ken Worpole at the *NS* party. All of a sudden, however, an extremely grave expression passed across his face. He drew breath and said, sombrely, 'Are you Islander?'. Everyone around knew, I assured him. But his expression haunts me still. Was it such a frightful concession of mine, or was he nervously hoping for a prize? There have been lots of parties this year — County Hall throbs to the sounds of its penultimate discos — and there are ever more urgent causes. After the Miners Christmas Appeal there is A NIGHT FOR NICARAGUA (13 January, Piccadilly Theatre). We should make it a bumper night.

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Then there is the famine. I have to admit that as a boy I resented the starving millions. For I could hardly escape that refrain, so typical of England, whenever I spurned the vegetables: 'Eat up your food, don't forget the starving millions'. Or, if I was stubborn: 'Think of the millions who are starving and who'd just love to have a good meal like that!'. Why my discomfort should be added to their misery was never adequately explained. Let the starving millions come immediately, I thought, even a mere half dozen of them would be sufficient, then I really wouldn't have to eat up. So when, eventually, my own first offspring arrived I swore to scorn this device of liberal turpitude; fatherhood might be unavoidable, but I could evade the paternalistic imperialism of the British world-view; that warm and sincere arrogance — one thinks of Michael Foot — which insists that our deepest concern for the multitudes whose forefathers the British pillaged, shot and enslaved, should be added to our groaning tables. At least one revolting tradition could be terminated, or so I thought. I didn't allow for *Blue Peter*. This winter we've suffered a protracted battle with a seven-year-old's romance with fashion — spring fashions *only* throughout the cold weather. Finally, two nights ago I insisted that unless she put on a warm sweater immediately ('And NO argument!') she'd have to go to her room without supper. 'What!', came the immediate response, 'waste food with all the starving millions?'

○

When will children's programmes tell their wide-eyed audience about the truly revolting millions, those pocketed by the very rich? At least the *New Internationalist* has recently devoted an issue to the world's super wealthy rather than its grinding poverty, and it was a salutory reminder of the massive increase in inequality now taking place everywhere. Not least in Thatcher's Britain, where Richard Giordano, the head of British Oxygen Corporation (the outfit that has for so long helped the NHS to breathe) now 'earns' £771,600 a year. I wonder what he does with the £600? The new head of the Health Service receives a mere tithe of £70,000 for his job. So you see, our GLC comrades are not well paid after all. I wish all my readers a Giordano.

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But I must not go on too much in this vein — populism gets me into trouble. In my last diary I scorned the recent student protest only to receive a crushing rebuke from my nephew. He was on the demo that stopped London. It was his first experience of a mass event, in his first term at university, and he convinced me completely of its positive and political character. It was very tacky of me to suggest that the '60s were wholesome, while anger over today's student poverty is mere egoism. After all, the '60s were — alongside all the positive energy of that decade — the incarnation of doing one's own thing. So I hope 1985 will witness more student activism, and from now if I mention it, I'll check it out with my nephew first.

○

I hesitate to predict what lies in store. Looking through my cuttings on the miners I find this front page headline in *The Times* of 17 November: 'Pit Strike Collapse by Christmas'. As that news paper's proprietor said about the Hitler Diaries, 'we're in the entertainment business'. But it's not only because of the miners' strike that 1985 will be an important year for socialists in Britain. Its protracted character, and the depth of support which it has tapped, are evidence of the historic 'continental shift' now taking place in this country — or rather these countries — of ours. The miners' villages may be isolated, but the consequence of their resolute struggle will not be localised. So I hope we can resolve a pressing matter of terminology. Have you noticed how — in the media and in the dominant tones of the South east — it is OK to be 'dry' but bad to be 'hard', although as adjectives these terms mean the same thing? Likewise, 'wets' are somewhat repulsive but it's fine to be 'soft'. You can see how entrenched these signals have become by the strange mental buzz if you switch them around:

> Most newspapers in Britain adore the hards and ridicule the old fashioned right-wing softs. At the same time, of course, they loathe the radical drys and sing the praise of Labour wets.

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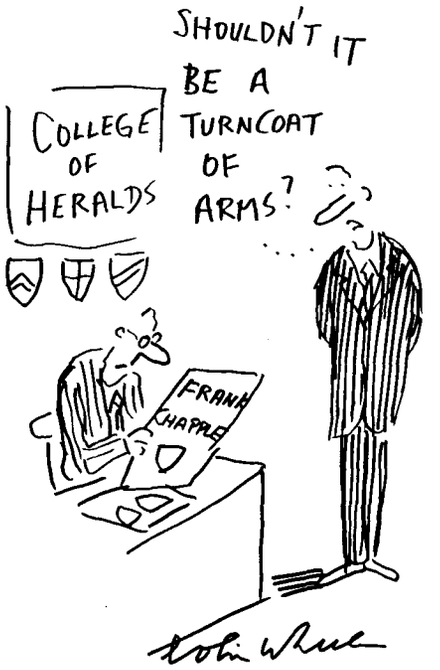
Perhaps it was OK when this language of manipulative attributes was a Tory preserve of wets and drys. It set the terms of the argument into cliches before any thinking had even begun, but that was their lookout. Now a similar exercise is being stitched into socialist argument, not least by politicians like Thatcher herself. Whereupon it is echoed in the columns of the press and then all too easily accepted by her opponents. We can expect a lot more of it in the coming months. Its crudity and debasement should be resisted. So I delighted to see the recent *Guardian* analysis by Seumas Milne (I'm assured this is a real person not a Manchester Misprint). He says that the Socialist Society, with its 'green edged feminism', is distinctive for being neither 'hard' nor 'soft' but somehow combining attributes of both. What is the word for this, then? Tumescent? 'No', I'm told, because of its supposedly masculine suggestiveness although the female epidermis is quite capable of rising. At any rate, if we are to make a New Year's resolution let it be to break the Right's monopoly of such metaphors. Perhaps readers can suggest alternatives.

Islander



ROGER WODDIS

These things shall be

Here, let me draw a diagram
Before the snow melts on the bough;
The nation in the year to come
Will more than muddle through somehow:
New triumphs will inspire us soon,
The first producer on the moon
Will be a British cow.

The gap between the rich and poor
Will narrow in the year ahead,
The heart will leap, a shooting star,
Above the calculating head;
And all will kneel in humble thanks
To caring governments and banks,
And see their children fed.

The year, in short, is bound to end
Upon an ever-rising wave;
Work will await the willing hand,
And none will know a pauper's grave.
All this a year from now I see,
With warnings to the would-be free,
And honours for the slave.

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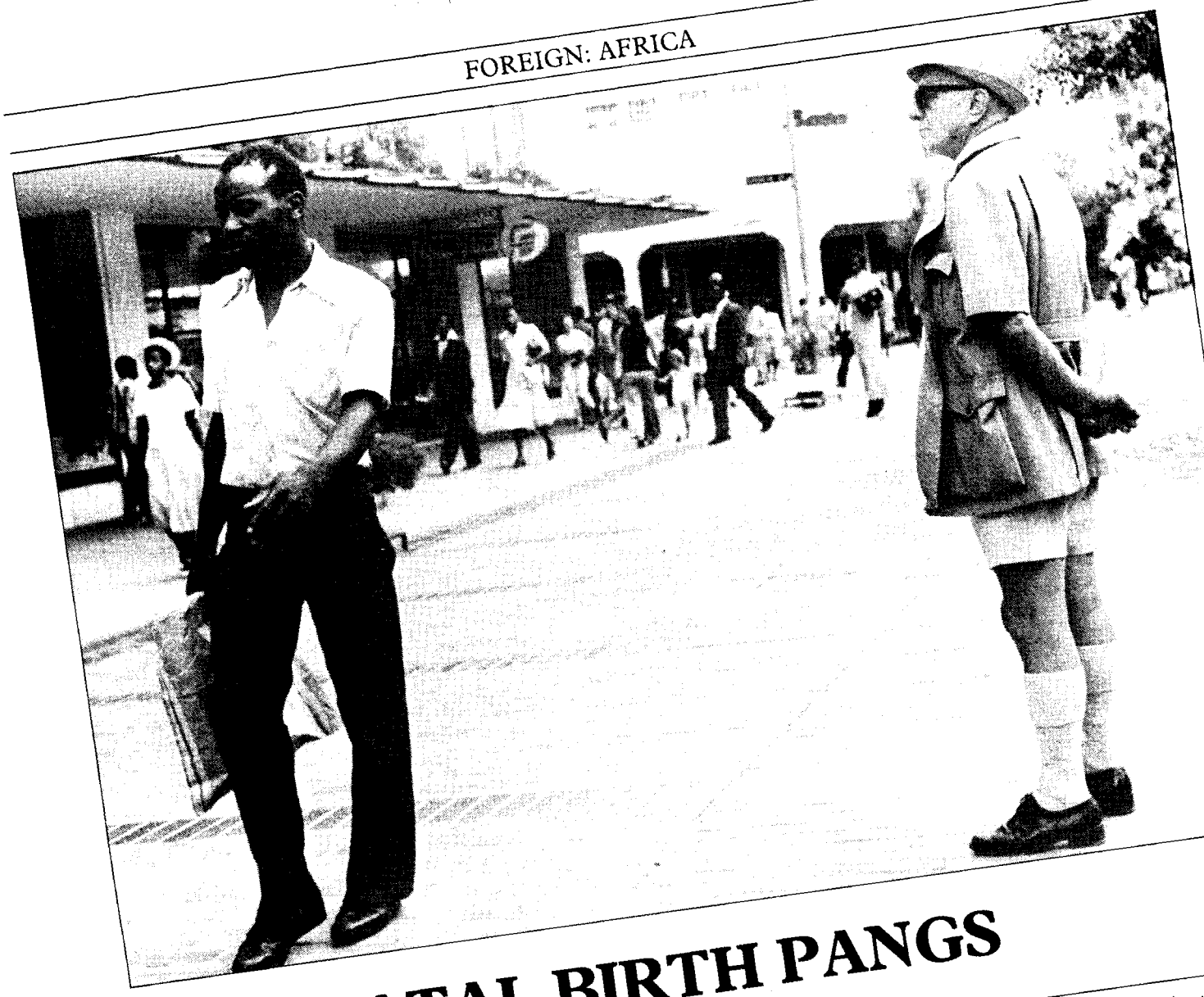

Camera Press

POSTNATAL BIRTH PANGS

Next month Zimbabwe goes to the polls. The problem facing Mugabe is not so much whether he can retain a majority, but whether he can hold the country together. John Hatch reports

ZIMBABWE WAS born out of prolonged, violent birth-pangs. When Robert Mugabe was elected as Prime Minister in March 1980 he inherited a country torn by years of civil war. Three armies co-existed: that of the defeated Ian Smith; ZANLA, the military arm of Mugabe's own ZANU party; and ZIPRA, the army of Nkomo's opposition ZAPU. In addition, both Muzorewa and Sithole had organised military auxiliaries. Out of this complex mixture of mutually hostile combatants a national army had to be forged.

The economic heartlands of the country, in agriculture, industry and commerce, remained in the hands of the white minority, Smith supporters. One of the dilemmas Mugabe faces is whether he can rely on them to supply essential economic resources under a government drawn from those who had defeated Smith. Above all, could this inherited economic structure allow for any genuine transfer of land ownership?

One single universal vision unified the various groups of freedom fighters; the passionate desire for land. Could those who had fought in the bush, who had terrorised the white farming families until they accepted that white hegemony was defeated, be rewarded land for which they hungered? If they were, what effect would this have on the food provision and on the economy which were bound to depend for some years on experienced white farmers and businessmen?

Mugabe could certainly not count on united political support in his efforts to build a new nation. Smith and his supporters remained sullenly hostile. Muzorewa and Sithole, having squandered their massive American subventions in a vain search for votes, felt that they had been cheated of their rightful political inheritance. Although Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU had formed an uneasy alliance with Mugabe's ZANU during the Lancaster House conference which led to elections and the end of white government, the alliance had been sundered by the lure of electioneering. The title adopted by the alliance, 'Patriotic Front', had been commandeered by Nkomo's ZAPU for the purposes of the election.

True, Mugabe had won 57 of the 80 seats open to Africans. He commanded an absolute majority in the 100-strong parliament. Yet the Lancaster House agreement tethered him. He could not remove the segregated 20 white seats without the consent of every member of parliament — including the 20 white holders of the seats. He knew that both Smith and Muzorewa would be wooed by his South African neighbours, shocked by the new threat he presented to apartheid in southern Africa. They might well be tempted into assisting in the overthrow of his new regime, especially as many of Smith's armed forces were known to be bitterly resentful of the destruction of white domination. Mugabe might include the opposition ZAPU in his government, but he was fully aware that Nkomo, regarding himself as the father of Zimbabwe nationalism, felt humiliated by his electoral defeat. ZAPU party

Black and white (above) reconciled?

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Camera Press

Parliamentary legitimacy and racial reconciliation have been the hallmarks of the Mugabe government: but what about class?

members might well feel that they owed only a partial loyalty to the new state.

If these political uncertainties were not sufficiently daunting, Mugabe knew that he had to face many rivalries within his own party. His majority had been gained almost entirely from amongst the Shona-speaking peoples. Mugabe had been chosen as leader of the new nation by substantial majorities in Manicaland, Victoria, Mashonaland, and a comfortable majority in Midlands. In each of these regions the vast majority of the voters were Shona-speakers (there is no Shona tribe, as such). He could attract less than 10 per cent in both Matabeleland areas, where the majority of voters spoke Sindebele. While Nkomo has always been recognised as the unrivalled leader of ZAPU (rule by single chieftains being traditional among the Ndebele), the Shona-speaking communities are more accustomed to government through councils. Mugabe had been accepted by 1980 as the spokesman of those who supported ZANU. Yet he knew that there was little love lost between the major Shona-speaking groups, the Karanga, Zezeru and Manyika, historically separate communities. The tragic death of Josiah Tongagara in January 1980 removed the one man who emerged from Lancaster House able to hold together these competing communities and who could have perhaps kept Mugabe and Nkomo in the alliance which had proved effective during the conference.

THE MOST outstanding success of Mugabe's regime over the past four and a half years has been in racial reconciliation. Few could have imagined that relations between black and white could have become so relaxed after the bitterness and violence of the 1950-80 period. Fortunately the worst racists among the white community emigrated in the first two years of independence, though there have also been some returns, as the realities of life in other countries, especially in South Africa, are contrasted with the comforts whites still enjoy in Zimbabwe. In all the white community has shrunk from about 250,000 by roughly 100,000.

Those whites who have remained seem genuinely involved in the progress of Zimbabwe. Commercial farmers still grumble, particularly about black squatters who claim their right to land by simply occupying it. Racial tensions can quickly be rekindled by suspicions that saboteurs, trained and financed by South Africa, have returned to undermine the state. Yet the genuine efforts of white farmers and business men alike can be judged from two significant economic indicators. Zimbabwe has been hit by the horrific drought which has devastated many parts of Africa over the past three years, yet it now has sufficient maize stocks to feed its people for more than a year. And for the first time since the mid-1970s, it is estimated that this year Zimbabwe will show a small surplus on its balance of payments. This has been achieved despite the world recession and a hostile international press which between them have drastically reduced capital inflows. It is due in part to severe import and exchange control restrictions, but has also been made possible by improved productivity in agriculture and mining.

Of course, this economic success has been bought at a price. Gross Domestic Product fell in 1982 by 4.4 per cent, last year by another 4 per cent. It is likely to be reduced this year by a further 2 per cent. Inflation averages 17 per cent this year; slimming of government, manufacturing and distribution has resulted in frightening unemployment and increasing discontent is evident amongst the working class. Yet this is less marked in Zimbabwe than in many other African countries. For urbanisation has never been rapid; 80 per cent of the population remains rural, and thus most town dwellers retain a stake in the countryside. It would take land hunger in rural areas to be linked with urban discontent for the tinder box to ignite.

The challenge facing Mugabe's government on the military scene has resulted in both considerable successes and important failures. National armed forces have been organised and trained out of the hostile military groups inherited from the past. The British training unit, BMATT (British Military Advisory Training Team) is universally agreed to have achieved quiet but very effective success. Now almost as universally agreed is the disastrous effect of the North Korean training. It was the Fifth Brigade, trained by them, which participated in the tragedies of Matabeleland. Inevitably, young men trained to be soldiers were left redundant after the war and turned to banditry. A country which has known violence for 30 years does not attain total peace in four years. From 1982 the Matabeleland disaster had many political consequences; but, above all, its human tragedies have soured relations between different sections of the African communities.

POLITICAL relations remain the pivotal factor for Zimbabwe's future. Mugabe made a promising start by forming a government of national unity, despite his absolute majority. Joshua Nkomo was included and prominent whites also became ministers. Denis Norman has remained throughout in the key post of Minister of Agriculture. The majority of white members severed their links with Ian Smith.

From early in 1982, however, storm clouds began to loom. Nkomo was dismissed because it was alleged that he was connected with the arms caches discovered in Matabeleland. ZAPU was accused of supporting the dissidents and bandits who were using their weapons in robbery and terrorism. A few white members of the armed services were alleged to be engaged in sabotage with South African support. Bishop Muzorewa was also accused of anti-Zimbabwean activities. Detention without trial, inherited from the Smith régime, was employed by the government. Fortunately, the judiciary, under Chief Justice Enoch Dumbetshena, a veteran nationalist, has preserved its integrity and independence. The government has always honoured its verdicts.

During the last three months both ZANU and ZAPU have held their national congresses. The focal issue for ZANU was establishing a single party state. The international press speculated on whether the Lancaster House constitution would be breached to attain this goal, whether an East European type state was contemplated. Mugabe himself made it clear to the 6,000 delegates that he sought his objective 'in the fullness of time, under the law and constitution'. He has assured visitors, including myself, that he has not fought a civil war against a closed white government in order to impose a closed black regime. He looks to the Yugoslavian model rather than to Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union or even to his major supporters, the Chinese. Like other African leaders, including Kaunda, Masire, Machel and Tambo who were on his platform, his principal aim is to forge institutions rooted in African tradition. He intends to do so constitutionally, despite the impatience of some of his party.

Yet he has also inherited African problems within his own party. White rule induced

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divisions never previously witnessed between cultural communities. He has to balance the rival claims of Zezeru, Karanga, Maniyka, Ndebele and other communities. Warned by the experience of communal consciousness in the women's conference earlier in the year, Mugabe demanded that clan considerations be discarded in the national elections for the party's Central Committee. The appointment of the more powerful Politburo revealed that, so far as communal influence remains, Mugabe's own Zezeru are at present in the ascendancy.

PERHAPS of greater long-term import was the Prime Minister's public attack on elitism in party and government. In other countries where single party states have been established on democratic lines, the greed of leaders has been a constant danger. Nkrumah suffered from this poison; so have Kaunda and Nyerere. The health of any single party state in Zimbabwe is likely to depend on Mugabe's success in imposing his leadership code, preventing party or government leaders from acquiring exorbitant wealth.

ZAPU's Congress also appeared to have been a success at the time. It reaffirmed Nkomo's leadership just as the ZANU Congress had left Mugabe unchallenged. Yet divisions have appeared since between those who have been arguing for a merger with ZANU and those who are determined to remain independent, refusing to acquiesce in a single party state with ZANU. Earlier this year Callistus Ndlovu, the Minister of Mines from Matabeleland, left ZAPU for ZANU. In November the most important remaining ZAPU ministers, Cephas Msipa and John Nkomo, were expelled from the government after the assassination of a ZANU senator at Beitbridge. Msipa at first accepted the key post of secretary-general of ZAPU at the Congress. Now he has resigned that position and from the party, believing that ZAPU is no longer seriously attempting reconciliation with ZANU. Joshua Nkomo is now considering forming an opposition alliance with other parties, and the section of ZAPU which believes in one national party does not consider that it can be achieved under his leadership. Most Ndebele still regard him as their leader, but the split in his party continues to deepen.

ZAPU has certainly suffered from attacks during the last three years — both physical and — by sections of the government — political. But this has tended to consolidate rather than destroy them. In both parties the divisions which are most profound rest on political outlook rather than on communal consciousness. Even though ZAPU has been driven into its Matabeleland fortress radicals still vie with traditional nationalists.

In the elections due in February Mugabe's ZANU will no doubt retain its majority. The election will be fought against a background of ethnic and regional rivalries. It may well be, though, that incipient class consciousness will emerge as a much more potent factor. Disappointment that independence has not brought about more immediate reforms and better living standards is already superimposed on ethnic or cultural causes of divided loyalties. The traditional nationalists face the radicals in both major parties with contrasting policies to meet this challenge. □

TURKEY

KEEPING IN WITH THE GENERALS

Chris Christensen on how the world press is 'muffled'

AFTER THE coup of September 1980, the Turkish generals effectively gagged the country's press with a series of martial law decrees and the co-operation of the law courts. Since then, they have also managed to muffle international reporting of Turkey's violations of human rights using both open harassment — as in the case of United Press International (UPI) correspondent Ismet Imset — and more discreet pressures on, for example, the *Guardian*.

The 'elections' of November 1984 brought no let up for the media. One of the first acts of the incoming assembly was to pass a draconian press law providing for long prison sentences and heavy fines for editors and writers publishing articles deemed contrary to the 'public morality' and threatening to 'national security'.

In the weeks leading up to the 'constitutional referendum' of 1982 and the 'election' of 1983 dozens of journalists and editors were arrested for expressing even the mildest criticisms of the regime, while newspapers of the right, left and centre were arbitrarily closed down for periods of varying duration. Lists of 'forbidden subjects' continue to be distributed to editors on a daily basis — reports on torture and prison conditions are all but forbidden, and severe restrictions are placed on the reporting of political trials.

Equally disconcerting is the continuing failure of the western press in general, and the British press in particular, to cover human rights and other political developments in Turkey. Last month, for example, the opening of a martial law trial against 48 peace activists went entirely undetected by the *Guardian* (the paper did cover — for three consecutive days — a trial of four Yugoslav intellectuals). The previous Turkish peace trial was, however, covered in the *Guardian* by its then correspondent, David Barchard. Barchard says he left the *Guardian* after being told to 'tone down' his reports on human rights; he was told that pressure had been put on the paper by the Turkish Embassy in London.

The case of UPI's correspondent, Ismet Imset, is also very revealing. Having joined UPI shortly after the coup in 1980, Imset swiftly attracted the ire of the generals by keeping up a stream of reports on human rights violations. When he applied for a passport to leave the country and attend a UPI training course in March 1983, he was beaten up by police and then, after complaining about the incident to his employers and the US Embassy, ordered to stand trial for offences allegedly committed five years earlier (see *NS* 30 September 83). Last month the charges — although not the evidence — were changed by the Martial Law Prosecutor to membership of an 'armed gang' and Imset, in the course of a mass trial, was sentenced to four years imprisonment and 14 months internal exile (to follow his release from national service).

More remarkable than the customary behaviour of Turkey's martial law courts, has been the response of UPI to the attempt to silence Imset and intimidate other Turkish journalists working for western agencies and newspapers. UPI has refused to deny the admissability of the case against Imset (even Elliot Abrams, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, and the US Ambassador in Turkey have appealed for charges to be dropped) and has never issued a formal protest to the Turkish government. At the same time, UPI has consistently warned Imset against, making his case public and discussing it with western journalists. But it was precisely public pressure and western journalistic opinion which, in 1981, forced the junta to drop an analogous case against the then *Financial Times* correspondent, Metin Munir.

The international press agency's response suggests that it has been more concerned with protecting its good relations with the Turkish government than the integrity — and safety — of one of its journalists. Shortly after Imset's conviction, UPI's Near Eastern representative approached his lawyer and discussed the handling of the case in the presence of a US Embassy official. When Imset complained that this constituted a 'gross interference in the lawyer-client relationship' and demanded that no further meetings should take place without his express permission, he was promptly informed that his letter constitued a resignation and that he was no longer considered a UPI employee. However, according to National Union of Journalists and Hugh Carneigie, a Reuters correspondent who has been monitoring the case, UPI officials have admitted privately that Imset has been sacked for criticising their handling of his case.

Given the generals' current predilections towards repairing their human rights image in Europe, their success in muzzling Imset is particularly disconcerting. If the European public are to be denied knowledge of human rights violations because foreign correspondents in Ankara are fearful of antagonising the junta, then the regime will be left free to deal with its political opponents as it sees fit. As David Barchard, who is now reporting for the *Financial Times* in Ankara, said to me recently: 'You can't protect other freedoms when freedom of the press has disappeared'. An interesting footnote to the Imset case is that since his trial the Turkish Embassy in London has formally protested to the *Financial Times* to demand that Barchard stop reporting it. □

This England

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□Britain's oddest honeymoon ended yesterday when David and Susan Threlfall emerged from ten days of isolation at the Common Cold Research Unit in Salisbury, Wilts. The newlyweds chose the centre for sentimental reasons — they first met there a year ago when they volunteered to take part in research. This time neither caught a cold. — *Daily Scotsman* (Mary Simpson)

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LETTERS

Tories still on course

Lawrence Spigel, Members Room, Town Hall, Hendon, London NW4

The attempt by Peter Riddell (*NS* 14 December) to provide a deeper meaning for the strength and breadth of the Tory 'revolt' on student grants is to be expected from those caught up in the hot-house atmosphere of Westminster and perhaps desperate to see the first swallow of a spring which is so long in coming.

Unfortunately, however, the political barometer is not changing, whatever the tides and currents that might be momentarily apparent in the febrile imaginings of political journalists. Those more in touch with the lesser actors and, more importantly, the consequences of government policy, are more accurate in seeing the whole incident as entirely consistent with the policies of a wholesale redistribution of wealth, power, opportunities and prospects. The insubstantial and bizarre attempt by Sir Keith Joseph touched to the quick the ranks of those who have come to expect everything and more from the government. To dress up self-interest as some sort of signal about the direction of government policy has more to do with an attempt to explain away how urgently and energetically the middle classes, who for years have done so well out of tertiary education as it is currently organised, can mobilise to protect a vital component of their subsidised privileges. Only when those same people show one-hundredth of the interest in the situation of the millions of unemployed and all those others so determinedly impoverished by their party will it be possible to talk of a 'sea change' in Tory attitudes.

Fortress Falklands attacked

Dennis Canavan MP, House of Commons

Your report on the Select Committee Inquiry on the Falklands is so selective as to be misleading (*NS* 14 December). Critics who have read the report in its entirety may conclude that it's a curate's egg but, with a Tory majority of 7-4, the Labour members could perhaps be given some credit for the following positive aspects:

1. 'Some kind of accommodation with Argentina is not only inevitable, in view of the cost of the present policy to the UK, but also desirable.' (para 94)
2. 'The UK Government... should... be willing to discuss the means by which progress can be made to try to find a negotiated settlement with Argentina as requested by the United Nations.' (para 96)
3. 'HM Government should now give a public undertaking that no further fortification of the Falkland Islands is being contemplated and that the size of the army, air force and naval presence in and around the Islands will be progressively reduced.' (para 98)

This criticism of the Fortress Falklands policy and of the UK government's intransigent stand on negotiations refutes your claim that the Select Committee Report 'agrees with Mrs Thatcher that it's hopeless negotiating with the Argies.'

WHAT DO YOU READ?

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For the record

Sir John Hill, President, British Nuclear Forum

The quotation attributed to me by Mr Tim Williams ('Revelatory loose talk from Nuclear Forum', *NS* 7 December) was so inaccurate, a correction is necessary.

I was referring to the detailed report of the study conducted by Sir Douglas Black into the incidence of leukaemia in the vicinity of Sellafield. It showed that there was no evidence to attribute the cause to radiation resulting from the operation of the Sellafield plant. I said 'Let us hope that it stops once and for all the parading of weeping relatives of cancer victims in front of the television cameras saying "It must be due to Sellafield..." ' I went on to say 'What I am concerned about is that these personal tragedies are paraded in a way which implies that it was caused by one thing when the statistical evidence is that it was not.'

A practical suggestion...

Michèle Roberts, London W2

James Bentley, reviewing *Human Values in a Changing World* by Daisaku Ikeda and Bryan Wilson (*NS* 14 December), quotes the authors agreeing that abortion is a 'conceivable [sic], absolutely last resort' in cases of rape and incest, and then quotes Ikeda saying 'it is more important to create social and moral conditions in which neither rape nor incest occurs.' James Bentley notes that Ikeda does not set out any practical suggestions for achieving this.

I have a small practical suggestion to make. As long as members of the male sex continue to rape women and girls why don't male religious and sociological thinkers desist from writing books in which they assume the right morally to judge the way women deal with the consequences of rape?

Freed in this way from hypocrisy, male thinkers could then ponder the question of male responsibility for these crimes and the whole problem of contemporary masculinity. They could try to imagine how women feel and think living in cultures where women are raped by men and simultaneously denied moral responsible choice around the results of conception.

Priorities for coal

J. Algie & W. Foster, Co-Directors, Brunel University Management Decision Programme

The views of the anonymous NUM representative who favoured high Coal Industry status (Letters 7 December) *were* fed into the Priority Decision System, and were taken fully into account in calculating an NUM resolution of the coal dispute (*NS* 23 November).

But the combined NUM weighting for this criterion was comparatively low, despite his own high weighting, because his colleagues had different views on this point. Further, the Priority Decision System (PDS) showed his own results would have become unacceptably inconsistent had he raised his own weighting of Coal Industry status (unless he changed some of his other judgments too).

In any case, Coal Industry status *is* important when weighted at 4.3 priority (the NUM's valuation of this criterion). It is just not so important as such higher priority NUM criteria as 'keeping the pits open' (at 13.4 priority).

Infertile debates

Father John Fleming, St Albans

I am the red-bearded priest who spoke to James Le Fanu at the House of Commons, and whom he has so gratuitously and rudely misrepresented in your magazine (*NS* 23 November). Mr Le Fanu suggests in his article that the opposition to 'IVF and embryo experimentation has become so obsessed with the "pandora" box of horrors it believes the new techniques will bring that it seems to have started believing its own fantastical stories.'

As this comment follows an entirely inaccurate representation of a private conversation, which referred to the possibility of IVF (*in vitro* fertilisation) being made available to transsexuals, Le Fanu has suggested that such an idea was my own 'fantastical' story. This is completely untrue. I said that some scientists in the field were interested in exploring the use of IVF for transsexual men and that if they could find a way to do it then there are some who very likely would.

The possibility of transsexual men becoming pregnant by *in vitro* fertilisation and embryo transfer was publicly raised in Australia by Professor Bill Walters, associate professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at the Queen Victoria Medical Centre, Victoria, Australia. Professor Walters was supported in this by Dr Alan Trounson, a scientist of international repute who is the scientific director of the Queen Victoria Medical Centre/Monash University/Epworth Hospital test tube baby programme. Dr Trounson said he was not sure yet if it were a practical possibility but if it could be done for a woman without a uterus why not also for a transsexual man?

The reports of this story were widely publicised in the Australian media. The 'fantastical' scenarios are described by those in a rather better position to know than your correspondent, i.e. scientists of high repute working in the field.

Throughout the article Le Fanu's position comes dangerously close to mediaeval papalism deployed against today's Galileos. He offers no objections *in principle* to experimentation on embryonic human beings. He just believes that the scientists shouldn't be able to do it because he, James Le Fanu, sees no scientific need for it. That just isn't good enough!

Those of us who see that such embryos are human persons are raising fundamental objections to manipulations of human embryos which will destroy them or which will lead them to being born into bizarre human relationships such as would be involved in the case of transsexuals. Mr Le Fanu would do better to try and deal with the total complexity of the issues he discusses which must include an assessment of the moral status of the human embryo.

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King of the gypsies

Michael Comley was a self-taught orchestral musician who became a social worker and then went mad. This is the story of how he found himself again

> For though I am not splenetive and rash, yet have I something in me dangerous which let thy wiseness fear.
>
> *Hamlet*, Act V

LEAVING the Psychiatric Hospital I turned right knowing that left led to home. It was a dry November night with clouds obscuring the moon. I was not conscious of the cold, feeling calm, relaxed and purposeful as I walked along an unfamiliar country road, certain of my unknown destination. At a road junction I turned left without registering the instructions on the signpost.

My leather holdall began to feel heavy; I stopped to transfer the weight to my other hand. This was the first station of the cross. From this moment, I repeated the action at regular intervals; each stop becoming another station. The holdall becoming my personal cross.

Seeing a light in a window I thought of Ruth, or was it Rachel? I followed the light as if it were the Star over Bethlehem until I came to a farmhouse. After knocking on the door I entered saying simply 'I have come from Barnsley Hall.' The occupants, to whom I was a stranger, did not seem afraid but were puzzled as to why the dog had not barked. On a settee was a heavy round wooden table top about four feet in diameter which I lifted with absolute ease and placed against a wall. The stone was rolled away from the Sepulchre. I stretched out full length on the settee perfectly relaxed and at one with my surroundings.

After having been given tea, I was driven back to the hospital and subjected to a formal admission procedure. I recognised the doctor as a social work colleague (although he pretended to be someone else). I gave my name as William Comely, but held back the 'truth' that I was the uncrowned King of the Gypsies brought to the hospital by prescribed ritual to await my accession rites and ceremonial.

Like Gogol's madman on realising that he is the King of Spain, I felt that 'before this revelation everything was enveloped in a kind of mist'. For the first time in my life I was absolutely certain of my identity, relieved of all responsibility, totally free and released from the constraints which had hitherto inhibited all feeling of spontaneous activity. It had taken me 37 years to find this peace. The cell, locked at my request, on a locked ward, gave me sanctuary. My pyjama cord was taken away and it was some years later that I understood why I shared a table at meal-times with the two most aggressive men on the ward.

MY DESCENT into madness had been an horrific time of fighting to hold on to self control. I had been working as a social worker for almost two years when my closest male friend, a former orchestral colleague, whom I had tried to support through a lengthy 'mental illness', committed suicide in my home. After his suicide I had plunged myself into work; predominantly with potentially suicidal mentally ill clients and the most aggressive client groups. It was as if I was struggling to prevent myself being taken over by some malevolent internal force. The only periods of calm came at my most psychotic, when I had a feeling of immense strength, absolute power and total certainty. During these episodes I terrorised a nearby gypsy site and one family in particular who, to their eternal credit, sought medical help for me.

I bought a lurcher puppy and trained him by behaving like an adult dog myself. My physical strengh was exhausted in building a near full-scale wooden horse from tree trunks for my two children, just prior to my hospital admission.

I realise now that my house became my caravan, a refuge and fortress against increasingly alien forces. My overwhelming need to protect myself and my family from these forces might have led to my barricading the house and perhaps to my destroying us all in a totally misguided attempt to protect. Fortunately my delusion was not total at this stage and some remaining sanity allowed me to

'I bought a lurcher puppy and trained him by behaving like an adult dog myself'

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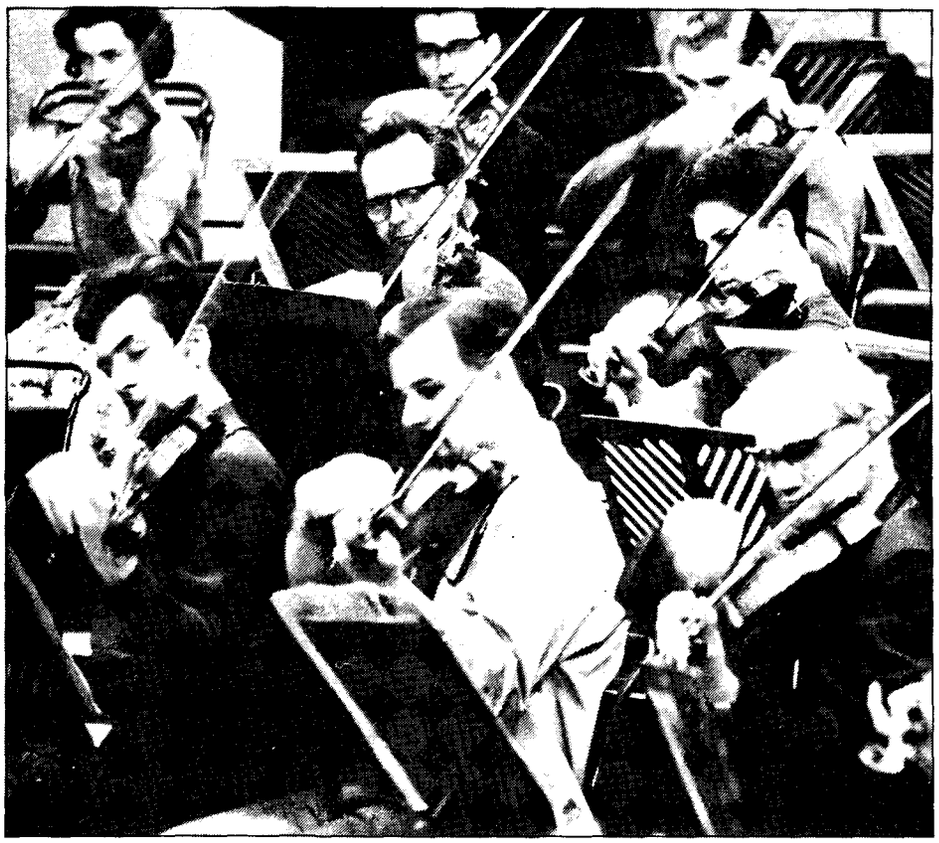
accept informal admission to hospital. Besides my delusions of power as the Gypsy King I drew on Christian imagery throughout my illness, perhaps as an attempt by my subconscious mind to provide a degree of control. To accept God was to accept a being more powerful than myself. My gypsy 'self' rationalised the hospital admission as part of the pre-accession ritual; my religious 'self' as a scourging.

Immediately prior to this I had been overwhelmed by feelings of indescribable intensity which subsequently gave me an emotional understanding of words such as despair, horror, dread, hate, evil and terror. It now seems obvious that the process was one of fighting the repressed anger in myself which had been denied for many years.

Although the most intense period of psychosis occurred in hospital, I can recall the incredible intensity and rapidity of my mental activity. All stimuli, whether aural or visual, were analysed in minute detail, interpreted and acted upon. The clock gave me messages with each tick. My right side became my aggressive half so that right leg crossed over left was an aggressive posture; left over right an appeasement gesture. I became hypersensitive to non-verbal communication, anticipating threat from other patients and dominating the admission ward by aggressive, minatory posturing. The regular removal of my shirt gave warning of my willingness to fight, even at visiting time. All humour was lost, as was any sense of responsibility towards anyone other than myself. I lived in a world which I had previously only inhabited in dream and nightmare.

Massive medication and electro-convulsive therapy jolted my complacency; initially leading to my revising my accession rituals so that, when the hospital was not invaded by my subjects on the proper day, I put back the ceremonial by one day, then one week and finally to Christmas Day.

Coming out of madness was as difficult as getting into it. Fortunately I was too exhausted physically, mentally and emotionally to struggle any longer. I drew strength gradually from family, friends, colleagues and from the local forest where I walked with my family and the dog. The violent, arrogant, self-confident and powerful gypsy had disappeared, leaving a frail William known as Michael William Comley; husband, son, father of Nick and Liz, home owning, mortgage-paying social worker, musician, friend, colleague, with all the complexity of real life, relationships and responsibilities. The last thing I could have coped with was any debate as to whether there was an hippopotamus under the desk.

I felt raw and vulnerable, having lost the

The author as self-taught second violin, bottom left

reassurance of my old coping mechanisms and forced to learn new responses. Having confronted my own worst fears, fear remained and, for some time, fear of slipping back into madness. It feels glib to speak of rebirth but I have no doubt that some kind of metamorphosis occurred, re-assembling the pieces of my old self and slowly rebuilding a personality with which I could eventually feel secure and comfortable. I needed to learn how to express my anger and love but tiredness, a very new feeling, protected me from attempting to do too much too quickly. As physical energy ruturned so did emotional and mental energy but instead of being irrational, unpredictable and confusing there was a new sense of order and calm underlying all activity. As if, for the very first time, some foundation existed on which I might build. No longer hounded by unknown doubts, fear, anxieties, ambitions and feelings but with a growing self-respect and confidence.

TWELVE YEARS later I am able to look back on my experience with a degree of objectivity. My illness was no 'not very well', 'nervous breakdown'; I was mad, insane, crazy, out of my mind. Clinically, a psychotic episode with hypermania.

There is an uncanny similarity between my experience and that described by Gogol in his 'Diary of a Madman' which I first read after my illness. It may be that the experience is a classic one but I find it difficult to understand how the sane Gogol could create Poprishchin in my insane image. Is the similarity between Poprishchin and myself or Gogol and myself? Is the real similarity between myself and the rest of humanity?

Why does an apparently sane, responsible, mature and intelligent man with professional insight into human behaviour, a calm, caring personality, go mad? Why choose to become King of the Gypsies, an arrogant, violent, egotistical and ruthless persona?

The simple answer to the first question would be an extreme form of grief reaction to the violent suicide of my closest male friend in my own home. Over an eight year period he had shown me the feeling side of my self, denied for most of my life. He had been the brilliant creative musician to my competent technician; the genius to my craftsman, the sensitive feeling person to my cold, logical and intellectual self; the client to my professional social worker; the Yin to my Yang.

After many years avidly reading both religious and secular philosophy, I had, at 33 years of age, left orchestral life for a social work training course. There I discovered Freud, Jung and Adler, the Behaviourists, sociology, psychology and anthropology. I revelled in the new found knowledge. It seemed as if I was involved in the psycho-analytic process leading to self-awareness. The shock of reading Anthony Storr's description of the schizoid personality in his book *Human Aggression* had immense intellectual impact, as did Eric Fromm's statement 'He is aware of himself as an active and

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creative individual and recognises that there is only one meaning of life: the act of living itself.' (*Fear of Freedom*).

Storr describes the schizoid personality as one which passionately longs for love but has so deep a mistrust of other human beings that any really intimate relation with another appears to them to be dangerous. Their self-protective reaction is to endeavour to maintain human relationships on a superficial level or else to withdraw emotionally into isolation, defended against both love and hate, since, for them, these two emotions are not clearly differentiated. Storr goes on to describe the schizoid characteristic of a strong desire for power and superiority, adding that failure to achieve a superior position in real life may lead to a secret life of fantasy in which they may imagine that they are so powerful as to be invulnerable.

> It is common to find delusions of absolute power, royal birth or other grandiose imaginations in a person who is in fact so inadequate to life's demands that he has to be cared for in a mental hospital.
>
> Anthony Storr: *Schizoid Defences Against Hostility*

Recognising myself as schizoid gave me intellectual security at the time. I even found consolation, identification and some pride from Storr describing Beethoven as having many schizoid traits. I could not have known that Storr was unwittingly predicting the future course of my life.

I left social work training, confident of my intellectual ability for the first time, feeling intellectually reborn, capable and secure. A changed person, but totally failing to recognise the immense difference between intellectual and emotional understanding and acceptance. The process of madness was, for me, like shedding a skin. An escape from my old personality which had denied my emotional self. The sick role provided an opportunity to change, licence to behave differently. Think about 'He has not been the same since...' Perhaps he chose or needed to be different.

My post madness self brought emotional understanding into balance. I was able to state 'I am a musician'. I reconciled Marxism with Christian philosophy without God. I recognised and accepted the violence within me and my anti-authority attitudes. I accepted my personal truth that society could only achieve the change I had in mind through violent and bloody revolution. More important, I learned that I could never be part of such revolution. I had learned how to feel.

WHY KING of the Gypsies?

My tutor in college suggested I read Gilbert Ryle's *Concept of Mind*. I had previously accepted Descartes's 'cogito, ergo sum' (I think, therefore I am). Ryle shocked me into the realisation that my thought processes were totally unstructured, without logical foundation, wild and undisciplined.

After four years as a professional violinist, I had paid for a set of six lessons with the most eminent Midlands string teacher. These were my first formal lessons; her sole comment was that I played like a gypsy. I realised that my fiddle playing, as I was to come later to realise about my thinking, had no real foundation, logic or method.

Having been denied a place at music college by the Education Department refusing me a grant, I had fought to prove the system wrong. Virtually self-taught, I came to lead the Birmingham School of Music Orchestra and eventually led the Midland Youth Orchestra. My playing of the Beethoven violin concerto at a Hallé audition led to Martin Milner asking me to play the scale of C Major. I could not do so. Even now, leading my own string quartet and playing better than I did as a professional fiddle-player, I do not know which key we are playing in. Fortunately it no longer makes me feel inadequate.

My intelligence as a young child led to my spending only two years instead of four in junior school and entering grammar school on my tenth birthday. Because assumptions had been made I taught myself the alphabet, multiplication tables and the Lord's Prayer. At thirteen I suffered from chorea, the classic 'St. Vitus's Dance' and, because no explanation was given to me, I feared insanity. My adolescent coping mechanism was to make a solemn vow aloud 'Never to feel and to allow myself to be hurt again.' From this moment I rejected the grammar school which had grudgingly accepted poor working class children because of the 1944 Education Act. Whatever else I failed to understand emotionally, I knew the emotional meaning of alienation.

From 14 years onwards I disappeared into fiddle playing. At 17, inspired by Menuhin's playing of the Brahms and Mendelssohn concertos in Birmingham Town Hall, I was determined to eventually play three concertos in the Carnegie Hall. At 18 the Army gave me a clarinet and a book; in teaching myself I learned the names of the notes. At 25 I had become a competent technician, a dependable and reliable second fiddle player with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, both accepted and respected.

Throughout this period, from 14 years to 25 years, I allowed myself little emotional contact with others. No adolescent peer group relationships, no adolescence. I was isolated and aloof, in single-minded pursuit of musical ambition, devoting a minimum of five hours each day to undisciplined practice. For the last four years I worked full time as an assistant to two chartered accountants, who, until I was offered a position with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, were not even aware that I played the violin. The leather holdall which eventually became my cross was my leaving present from the organisation.

The restrictive discipline of orchestral playing denied me the freedom to express myself — available in jazz, folk or gypsy music. I was frightened, whilst playing Enesco's 'Rumanian Dances' by the violence of my emotional reaction. Having been acting sub-principal second violinist for some months, I feared my own ambition whilst listening to the leader's solos in 'Ein Heldenleben'. I escaped from music into social work for the wrong reasons, but, like an animal in search of salt, instinctively groping for emotional stability and fulfillment.

My marriage at 27 years of age was the beginning of my feeling adulthood and the process of emotional growth. Through learning to achieve a satisfying and complete ralationship with one other human being I slowly and cautiously came to risk myself in other relationships.

Over the years I have learned to use music as therapy and emotional self-expression. I have become more tolerant towards myself and others, less egotistical and more aware of the effect and influence I have upon the people around me. Without feeling perfect, I feel safe, convinced as to the value of my work, having eschewed promotion for the sake of status or money. Replacing the ambitious drive was difficult but, if asked, the seemingly grandiose 'pursuit of excellence' is as near as I can get to an acceptable substitute.

Now able to recognise and accept the 'gypsy' part of myself, I know why I had to be king. I could not play a subservient or equal role. No other role would have given free rein to my violence. I feel that I had to become mad in order to create my personal sanity. I no longer search without really knowing what it is that I have found. I know that I work best with the high degree of freedom which I have found as a social worker; and against systems. I am fortunate that my job employs all aspects of my personality. Part of my 'self' may remain locked in adolescence. I recognise madness but no longer question sanity.

> You move on in your discoloured, rent,
> threadbare, battle clothes,
> A figure threading through jungle, as
> before,
> Through the sierra, broad chest half-bared
> to the elements,
> Respiring words and weapons,
> Burning sea wind and slow-blooming rose,
> There is no rest for you.
>
> Nicholas Guillen
> 15 October 1967

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Tendentious

Bob Woffinden

Britain in Our Century
ARTHUR MARWICK *Thames & Hudson* £12.95
Picture Post 1938-50
ed. TOM HOPKINSON *Chatto* £8.95

SUBTITLED 'Images and Controversies', **Britain in Our Century** is a curiously conceived book. The 'images' are the 149 illustrations and the 'controversies' the arguments about social developments which have been thrashed out in academic circles. These twin themes never seem to interconnect satisfactorily.

Part of Marwick's objective is to demonstrate the usefulness of period photographs in studying social history. Some of those included here are indeed worth a thousand words; but the selection is so arbitrary as to be idiosyncratic. Why, for example, is there no illustration of a television set, or of anything at all to do with the medium which has been the most potent factor in post-war social change?

Further, the technique of extrapolating social data from photographic material is itself hazardous. A comparison of the hunger-marchers of the Thirties with those on the March for Jobs in 1983 reveals that the latter appear less haggard and much better nourished — but is that a fair comparison?

The process, of course, is invalidated altogether if the photographs are wrongly captioned. Which can happen. Marwick selects a picture of the late Seventies *Times* dispute to illustrate the gulf between management, represented by managing director Marmaduke Hussey, and workers, represented by an NGA picket. Unhappily, though, the shot shows not Hussey, but former *Times* editor, William Rees-Mogg.

The 'controversies' are familiar enough: was there a moment after the First World War when the country stood on the brink of revolution? Did the experiences of the Second World War summon up a new national accord on the need for adequate welfare provision for all? Or might the accord have existed anyway? Is there a social cohesiveness in this country — a sort of latent SDP factor which Marwick terms 'secular anglicanism' — which ensures the frustration of extremist groups and the survival of the status quo?

Having aired the alternative theories on these questions, Marwick takes the opportunity to suffocate all those which conflict with his own. It's a futile exercise, like kicking balls into an empty net. At one point, he interjects several parentheses of his own into a lengthy quotation from a rival's work. Such professional fouls do not enhance Marwick's prestige; the lay reader is left with the impression that he is chafing because he doesn't have as much academic kudos as he thinks he deserves.

There is a lot of tendentious material here. 'It is fairly clear', writes Marwick, 'that intelligent opinion in Britain felt that the Falklands episode should have been avoided.' What an extraordinary sentence: clearly, that is what he, and I, felt; but we can claim no monopoly of 'intelligent opinion', whatever that is.

He says that three 'vitally significant' films were released in 1959: *Room at the Top, I'm All Right Jack* and *Sapphire*. The last, a pioneering examination of racial tensions, was not mentioned at all in Marwick's much lengthier *British Society Since 1945* (Pelican). His estimation of it must have been derived from a recent Channel 4 screening. It is fascinating, certainly; but 'vitally significant', hardly.

The BBC, pre-ITV, is blandly described as a 'government monopoly'; the Lady Chatterley trial is wrongly dated; and Lord Wilson can be blamed for many things, but not for pushing the unemployment figures 'through the psychological barrier of two million'.

Britain in Our Century also suffers from the problem to which all works of contemporary social history are heir — namely, that it is easier to put into perspective the past than the present. This is despite the fact that a number of recent developments do bear out Marwick's central themes. Kenneth Baker's unfulfilled period as Minister for Information Technology, for example, is entirely consistent with the repeated, usually abortive, attempts of the British government to get to grips with science and technology. Since another of Marwick's concerns is the relationship between finance and industry, he might have mentioned the Wilson-George Brown Department of Economic Affairs, which, however ill-fated, was the most purposeful of the attempts to re-think this.

Several of the photographs used are taken from the archives of **Picture Post**, the most celebrated of British photo-news magazines, which folded in 1957. Tom Hopkinson's collection of edited highlights from the magazine during the years in which he was associated with it has lately been reissued. Previously published in 1970 and 1978, it provides a fascinating and genuine social history and is obviously a carefully-edited selection. Chatto's enterprise in making the book available again is to be applauded. Were it not that this review is appearing in the first week of January, I'd warmly recommend *Picture Post* as an ideal Christmas present. □

Stephen Romer

Higher things

I wish I could, like Soren Kierkegaard,
be absolute and let her face recede

until it is an island in the water
he called memory. Nothing impure

could touch his lasting image of Régine.
Only in memory is love immune

from longing to be with her all the time.
He kept a candle burning in each room,

unfinished manuscript on every desk.
I shall need all his courage for the task

of settling firmly to the sublime;
there is only her face to start from.

Strange bird

Alan Hurst

The Letters of D.H. Lawrence Vol III 1916-21
ed. JAMES T BOULTON and ANDREW ROBERTSON *Cambridge* £25

IN ONE of these letters Lawrence instructs a correspondent, at some length, on the connection between real thinking and sensuality. A few lines later he goes on:

> Excuse the pencil — I've got a cold and am in bed. And *don't* think I'm antagonistic. You resent me too much. Why should I not bellow, if I am the bellowing sort. You exasperate me almost to contempt still the liking doesn't change.

One warms to Lawrence's quirky humanity and the way it contrives to kick the prophet and genius up the backside.

When this volume opens Lawrence has finished *Women in Love*, but his personal nightmare is only just beginning. He and his German wife Frieda were ordered by the War Office to leave Cornwall within three days (section 14B of the Defence of the Realm regulations) on absurd suspicions of spying. His rage and despair exhausted itself in the Midlands and on 14 November 1919 he began his savage pilgrimage, zig-zagging through Italy and Germany, to anywhere that wasn't England. He must have felt like Alvina in *The Lost Girl* as she crossed the channel and

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Mark Haddon

watched England, 'like a long, ash-grey coffin slowly submerging'.

En route the letters were despatched with varying postmarks to a wide range of correspondents. They tell of Lawrence's tireless efforts to find a publisher for *Women in Love*, even the title of which was considered provocative. He keeps long-distance conversations going with Lady Cynthia Asquith, Mark Gertler, Koteliansky, breaks dramatically with Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield, and tries to recruit disciples for his ideal commune in California, or the Andes, or the South Seas. Sometimes the poet intervenes to describe the natural world — wild flowers, animal footprints in the snow, lambs peeping round their mothers with 'blithe impertinence', a dead owl.

His relationship with Frieda reaches a crisis point in the months before he is able to leave England: 'In a way, Frieda is the devouring mother. It is awfully hard, once the sex relation has gone this way, to recover. If we don't recover, we die. But Frieda says I am antidiluvian in my positive way.' However, by the end of the volume there is little doubt that Lawrence's only deep and lasting relationship was with his wife.

As with everything else by Lawrence, the ideas and feelings flow spontaneously. He writes to Mountsier, 'I don't think I want to keep Fontana Vecchia' [his house in Taorminia, Sicily] and the very next day to Mary Cannan, 'I think I shall go on with Fontana Vecchia for another year'. No wonder most attempts by the Lawrence industry to distil a consistent metaphysic result in gibberish. Lawrence's inner life is on permanent standby to issue the latest bulletin, often countermanding the previous one.

'When a man writes a letter to himself,' ponders the hero of *Aaron's Rod* (work in progress during this period), 'it is a pity to post it to somebody else. Perhaps the same is true of a book.' When he generalises from his own personal revolt against his past, his Englishness, his mother or his isolation, Lawrence's novels and short stories *are* like letters to himself. His actual letters, less under the author's conscious control, give more direct and fascinating glimpses of the man in all his contradictions.

One such glimpse is occasioned by the question of habitat. 'A real panic comes over me, when I feel on the brink of taking another house. I truly wish I were a fox or a bird.' Yet the Lawrence who inhabits these letters is thoroughly domestic: he loves housework, cooking, embroidery, gardening ('Oh, do get me a gardening book *Culture of Profitable Vegetables in Small Gardens* by Sutton and Sons — 6d.'). His sense of the character of a particular room equals Virginia Woolf's.

He had a gift for finding lovely homes and the one which nearly ensnared him was Fontana Vecchia, in Taorminia. It perched above a lush garden with the coast of Calabria below, swerving away 'into God knows what dawn of our world'. The letters from here are characterised by a relative stillness and tranquillity but his passion for travel is never subdued. One Sunday evening in May 1920, during a concert by the town band in the Greek theatre, Lawrence sits squirming at the music of Bach, Schubert, Wagner and Brahms, preferring the competing insect noises, becoming more miserable and puritanical. Then, through the broken windows, he notices the sea and feels 'a nostalgia that is half-ecstasy and half-torture'. This familiar cry of discontent is Lawrence at his most ambivalent: is the savage pilgrimage quest or flight?

In this edition some of the victims of Lawrence's wrath are allowed the right of reply in footnotes. 'I lunched with John Galsworthy yesterday — sawdust bore.' Galsworthy's reaction to Lawrence: 'Interesting, but a type I could not get on with. Obsessed with self. Dead eyes, and a red beard, long narrow pale face. A strange bird.' □

Future echoes

Anna Coote

Time and Tide Wait for No Man
DALE SPENDER *Pandora* £5.95

HENRY HAM is a gentleman of six foot four inches and nearly 20 years of age. 'I am a seeker after originality in dress,' he writes, 'believing with all my soul that through clothes one may express one's personality.' He begs for some 'original ideas' on how to spend his modest dress allowance and his letter is published in *Time and Tide* on 4 January 1921. The distinguished editor of the Men's Page, Sir Duffer D'Amboring, Bart., advises the young man to line his waistcoats with scraps of silk handkerchief and thereby render them reversible, giving 'excellent economic variety'.

In another issue of the same magazine, young Rebecca West writes of 'a tendency on the part of men to go and see what women are doing and tell them not to'. She points out that 'this procedure is known . . . when the sexes of the participants are reversed, as nagging'. She argues that 'women have gone so dizzy under this perpetual nagging that they have begun to believe in it themselves'.

Dale Spender has been digging in the British Museum and has disinterred a remarkable political journal of the post-suffragette era. Now we know that we are not just fighting the same battles again, but we are even using the same phrases, the same jokes.

Margaret Haig, the Viscountess Rhondda, launched *Time and Tide* in 1920, to carry on the political campaigning after women had won a restricted right to vote. Vera Brittain, Winifred Holtby, Cicily Hamilton, Virginia Woolf and Naomi Mitchison were among the impressive list of contributors. They shared a sense that women could be a strong political force *as women*, raising the consciousness of women and men, and putting pressure on parties and governments.

Dale Spender has not been helped by the literary executors who refused permission to reprint articles by Holtby, Brittain and a few others, but she has drawn together an excellent collection in spite of that. Crystal Eastman, writing in 1923, explains how she refused as a child to make her own bed unless her brothers also made theirs. Her mother, a feminist, agreed and it became a rule that applied to all household labour. But her own six-year-old son, who wants to be a sailor, now tells her:

> 'When I'm grown up I'm going to have my wife go with me on the ship.'
> 'Yes, and what will she do?'
> 'Oh, make the beds, I suppose . . .'

Eastman laments: 'How can I expect to counteract the steady insistent suggestion of school, story, song and game that girls are weak and boys are strong . . .?' One gets an uncanny sense of inverted *déjà vu*, sharp enough to make the eyes water.

The magazine proposes in 1923 a political agenda that puts women's concerns in a proper perspective: peace, work, houses, temperance, better conditions for children and equality between men and women.

> Half the parties will admit these things at the tail-ends of their programmes of course, in the place where they put the things which catch votes but don't mean business. But where is the party that will make these its real, solid party planks?

Where, indeed?

Past echoes present again and again. An article in 1925 looks at why fewer women than men get involved in trade unions. Men have fought so hard to stop women encroaching on their jobs in industry, the writer argues: 'They have succeeded to such a degree that the interests of the workers as women have been, and are, entirely subordinated to the interests, real or supposed, of the male workers.' And a report in 1928 on the founding of a new girls' school tackles curricular differences for girls and boys.

> There can be nothing more dangerous to the whole structure of society than this attempt of the reactionaries to train women from their earliest years for a subordinate position and to divide the community into two groups: human beings — and females.

Time and Tide in its original, feminist form had been buried so effectively that no one murmured a protest when the title was relaunched this year by dissident fogeys from the *Spectator* set. How Lady Rhondda would turn in her grave if she could see it now. □

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Shorter reviews

African Short Stories
ed. CHINUA ACHEBE & C.L. INNES *Heinemann* £2.50

The short story in modern African literature has never been as popular as the novel, yet one would have imagined it to be admirably suited to the modern African condition. This is because it deals best with fragmented societies whereas the novel depends, at least in part, on a stable social order. It is presumably to rectify the anomaly that the editors have brought together, in a single volume, stories from all parts of the African continent. But what ought to have been an interesting collection turns out to be a disappointing one.

There is, first of all, the sheer preponderance of already well-established names, including Achebe himself, Sembene Ousmane, Bessie Head, Nadine Gordimer, Luis Bernardo Honwana and Ngugi wa Thiong'o. All these writers' short stories are easily available elsewhere. Where are the new writers, those who have to rely on obscure and uncertain magazines for publication and for whom a volume such as this ought to have been a godsend? Out of the 20 writers represented here only six are relatively unknown.

Secondly, the stories by the established writers are by no means their best. Offhand I can think of at least a half-dozen stories from Nadine Gordimer's impressive output that I would have included ahead of 'The Bridegroom'. And if the editors were so anxious to err on the safe side, why the absence of Alex La Guma, an infinitely better writer than his compatriot Ezekiel Mphahlele?

Finally, and perhaps most damaging of all, the less well known writers included are by no means the most exciting.

Odun Balogun's 'The Apprentice' and David Owoyele's 'The Will of Allah' are merely competent, while Abdulrazak Gurnah's 'Bossy' strikes me as pretentious and unreadable. Meanwhile, the co-winner of this year's prestigious Noma Award, Njabulo Ndebele, is conspicuous by his absence, as are some of the more notable Egyptian short story writers whose works are at last becoming known to a wider public.

Adewale Maja-Pearce

National Fictions: World War Two in British Films and Television
ed. GEOFF HURD *BFI Publishing* £3.75

At the outbreak of World War Two British film production was harnessed into making a series of celebratory documentary films about life on the Home Front and the steady resilience of the British people in face of Fascist aggression. Collective life — particularly working-class life on the land and in the cities — was the major heroic subject. From Grierson's pioneering documentary about Lowestoft fisherman, *Drifters*, in 1929 through documentaries with titles such as *Night Mail, Shipyard, Coalface, London Can Take It, Listen to Britain*, a whole populist tradition emphasised the unitary scheme of things in the face of adversity. Yet within five years of the war the British film industry was churning out a series of feature films celebrating the deeds of individual public school heroes on land, sea or air, and radically reconstructing British popular history in the process. A war of the many had within years of its ending become a war of 'the few'.

This series of essays from the BFI comes with an unexpected clarity and urgency, qualities not usually associated with the larger part of film criticism. Because they were produced for a BFI summer school which coincided with the Falklands/Malvinas war, their writers were particularly conscious of elaborating the continuities of British mythologies and iconographies of war, and so there are many stunning insights into the role which film and television have played in framing the way we interpret our past and present. And World War II is still — unlike World War I which remains a nightmare of British military incompetence — a rich seam to be mined by script-writers for popular television series like *Dad's Army, Tenko, We'll Meet Again* and for playwrights such as David Hare with *Licking Hitler* or Ian McEwan with *The Imitation Game*.

Yet, as the opening essay by Graham Dawson and Bob West shows, in the battle between 'public' and 'private' forms of popular memory, the state has all the major institutions — museums, air shows, anniversary days, commemorative stamps, the production values of popular publishing and film-making. Whereas oppositional forms of memory — letters, diaries, private conversations and arguments — still fail to engender an effective challenge to the dominant meanings.

This is a very thought-provoking and timely publication.

Ken Worpole

Calling for Action: An Autobiographical Enquiry
DONALD SOPER *Robson Books* £8.95

Donald Soper was born in 1903. At Cambridge in the 1920s he decided to become a Methodist minister. As a social worker, a brilliant preacher, a committed socialist, a teetotaller and a pacifist he effectively dominated British nonconformity for 50 years. Harold Wilson perceptively gave him a peerage.

Now he has written an 'autobiographical inquiry' in the fashion of Marcel Proust, hanging his thoughts on well-remembered incidents to open up past experience. Some of the most telling derive from 57 years of knockabout open-air speaking on Tower Hill. 'You parsons are all mad', cries one heckler, leading Soper into a meditation on the nature of insanity.

Banned from the radio in wartime, he spotted that the authorities had sent a man to take notes on everything he said at his open-air meetings. Soper would often asked if he was going too fast for the official spy. 'He would nod or insist that I went over a particular passage again.'

Soper's involvement in the Peace Movement of the 1920s and '30s leads him to draw lessons for today's anti-war campaigners (and he notes a sad decline in the fervour of the Church's support for those opposed to organised State violence). His thinking is exceptionally coherent. Advertisements for alcohol he regards as 'one of the most disastrous aspects of the acquisitive society'. Similarly the advertising of cigarettes is 'an example of the capitalist system ignoring or rejecting all morality in principle and making up its own laws to serve its own interests'. However, the modest government warning appended to the propaganda does indicate a way forward: public intervention to create a less rapacious society.

His years of social work in the West London Mission, aligned with his commitment to Jesus's injunction that we should lay up treasures in heaven and not on earth, have forced on him the conclusion that we need a political revolution in order 'to turn our acquisitive social system into a cooperative commonwealth'.

James Bentley

Between Moon And Moon: Selected Letters of Robert Graves 1946-1972
ed. PAUL O'PREY *Hutchinson* £14.95

Paul O'Prey's title alludes to the poem, 'Between Moon And Moon', which Robert Graves wrote for Margot, a young Canadian girl who came into his life in the summer of 1959. Readers of *In Broken Images* (1982) — O'Prey's previous volume of Graves's letters — will know that this poet does not regard a woman as an individual creature of flesh and blood but as an embodiment of the White Moon Goddess, the poetic Muse he has courted since he lived with Laura Riding in the 1920s and 1930s. Margot, the second of four Muses to appear in this book, first accepted the adoration of Graves then ran off with another poet.

So much is par for the course of Graves's life and he accepts it philosophically. In a letter, of 26 August 1962 to James Reeves, he writes: 'My grey hairs are inconsequential (though it is hard for people to see that) because this isn't a love-affair in the usual sense: so many strange, far-reaching events have already sprung from it. If I told you them in a brief news-summary you'd think me bonkers.'

Though Graves was, financially anyway, taken to the cleaners by another Muse — Aemilia, a Mexican-American girl — he told Idries Shah (2 July 1964) that 'the most important problem in the world is the fateful relation of woman's being to man's doing and I have myself learned more from her on this subject than from anyone else in the world.' Thus Aemilia was absorbed into his perpetual myth-making.

These relationships with the Muses illustrate the innocence that is an important part of Graves's personality. Judith, Margot, Aemilia and Julie — the four Muses of the book — were not pursued sexually by the poet but perceived imaginatively as inspirational visitations. More damagingly, Graves's touching naivety involved him in a serious threat to his reputation as a scholar.

With the encouragement of Idries Shah, an authority on Sufism, the poet published (in collaboration with Omar Ali-Shah, Idries's brother) a version of *The Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam* (1967) which he claimed was more authoritative than the famous Fitzgerald translation. After the hostile reception accorded to the new *Rubaiyyat* Graves was unable to direct his critics to his supposedly impeccable manuscript source. A letter of 11 November 1970, to Idries Shah, speaks of the sensation Graves had of 'putting my head into a trap from which the Shahs were unable to extricate me'.

As well as covering such matters and containing fascinating asides on topics like hallucinogenic drugs and nose-bleeding, O'Prey's selection contains letters on important events such as the publication of *The White Goddess* in 1948 and Graves's election as Oxford's Professor of Poetry in 1961. The book has enormous biographical value. With all his human failings, moreover, Graves comes across as a consummate literary artist forever searching for suitable subjects to occupy his intensely creative time.

Alan Bold

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FILMS

...and roundabout

John Coleman

The Swing (PG)
Everyman
A Man Like Eva (18)
Screen on the Hill
Slow Moves
ICA

Anja Jaenicke gives a formidable performance as truculent, tomboyish Mathias in *The Swing*

'THE UPS and downs of a German-French family in Munich 100 years ago', proposes an opening title and Percy Adlon's **The Swing** may be said agreeably, often ravishingly to fulfil that promise. You can see why John Gillett, in his London Film Festival programme note, likened it to *Fanny and Alexander*. At 133 minutes, the period piece has an elegant, intelligent, impressionistic sweep to its examination of the intricacies of kinship, as well as references implicit and explicit to the larger historical context of the times. But frankly the Bergman was a very different sort of affair at heart and, in its characteristic preoccupations and obsessions, intensely *personal* in a way that Adlon's slighter, skimming movie — an adaptation of Annette Kolb's 1934 autobiographical novel — can never be: the comparison raises the wrong kind of expectations.

Not one family, in fact, but two are pointillistically observed here and if the Catholic Lautenschlags, father the Royal Garden architect in Bavaria, get most of the action (and a lively, affectionate, feckless and argumentative bunch they are, too), the snobbish and much grander Von Zwingers, Prussian and Protestant, nip in and out to furnish a contrast, some ironies, intimations of political ferment.

Of the Lautenschlag children, three girls and a boy, it is unruly, harsh-voiced chatterbox Mathias (the Kolb stand-in), at 15 the youngest, who dominates in a quite formidable performance by Anja Jaenicke. She is outrageously at the centre of things, as when she cries her dislike of Bismarck, howls the house down for a bike or leads young Candida von Zwinger up the winding steps inside a giant statue into the head, out of which their arms comically poke. She is a nuisance at a 'foal and filly' dance given by a Baroness, a Jewess — she announces — whose title was bought for her by a rich American husband: it's at this youngsters' ball that Strauss's new Emperor Waltz is played. She wants writing paper with the motto 'Annoy people'. And, significantly, in a jarring fantasy-sequence, she is the one who hears sprightly music turn macabre, sees visions of blue-uniformed soldiers, black-clad widows, a naked corpse, old folk mourning, lost.

For this truculent, tomboyish Mathias is also the observer at times, on the fringes of others' unhappiness, passive and perceptive. She watches, in the foyer of the splendid theatre where Duse is to act, as sinister, foppish young Monsieur Lhombre (who sings to French mama's piano and makes up to 20-year-old sister Gervaise) and a prince reminiscent of Oscar Wilde nearly embrace. She and Gervaise (equally remarkable Lena Stolze, whose funny, lightning impressions of quaint incidents and mannerisms delight the whole family) are mute witnesses as nice, vague papa — 'He's room-blind — he sees nothing but his trees and bushes' — for once rows furiously with hypersensitive mama about her extravagance. Mad granny has died and the unnecessary bill for mourning clothes 'costs more than a public garden'. Why? '*Parce-que-il-faut*,' enunciates beautiful mama (Christine Kaufmann), above such pettiness, a determined alien among these Teutonic barbarians.

Throughout, there is the sense of a series of virtuoso occasions, which is finally the film's weakness: there *is* an arbitrariness of event. But how well everyone performs, how painterly is the informing eye, how superlatively Juergen Martin's camera prowls and glides and soars . . . Statues, palaces, the countryside, a hazardous last trip among grey, granitic mountains: the city, the plain and the heights are vividly celebrated. Memory pleasurably rescues dozens of fragments. An absurd cauliflower served whole; Professor von Zwinger pompously, proudly and precisely using the new-fangled telephone; a group of bicyclists holding up first a carriage, then — more novelty — a motor car; Herr Lautenschlag (Rolf Illig) crunch, crunching over snow, gazing at blackbirds in bare branches, onion domes, a lake, pensively *experiencing* his Munich; the hierarchal groupings at the opening of a Horticultural Exhibition he has designed: there is a fine, disorderly order of richness, after all.

Eva Mattes played the title role in Adlon's Proust film, *Celeste*, and, of course, appeared in several Fassbinder movies. In Radu Gabrea's deuced odd and unpleasant **A Man Like Eva**, she dons beard, hat, specs, leather jacket and pimples and, effectively, plays Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Again an epigraph: 'It is better to be hated for what you are than to be loved for what you are not' (Gide) — and this weird, slouching, head-down, voyeuristic and bullying Eva/RWF (a genuinely fantastic impersonation) certainly inspires dislike. Not, however, among the motley crew she/he has assembled in a rented villa to make a version of *La Dame aux Camélias*, with an overall deployment of chunks of *La Traviata* musically to lend tone, or counterpoint, or something, to the prevailing squalor.

Money's running out; Eva slouches in front of a TV set, sends a couple of the actresses off to whore for the needed ready, randomly resumes direction, gets beaten up by some rough trade promised employment, mutters 'My art is one

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of power over people' and proves it by seducing his (Eva or not, it really is *his*) married leading man Walter (Werner Stocker) who also has it lengthily off — in several positions — with Eva's mistress Gudrun (Liza Kreuzer). From the outset one forms the impression that this is the manner of enterprise that can only end in tears after bedtime: and so it proves. I must admit the entire scatological curiosity exhales a strong odour of authentic Fassbindery.

At the ICA a brave season of Jon Jost cinematic experiments with an audience's patience includes 93 minutes of **Slow Moves**, on which I have copious notes: to divulge their tenor would lay me open to charges of (a) idiocy for having bothered and (b) libel. □

THEATRE

Show or tell

Benedict Nightingale

The Pope's Wedding and **Saved**
EDWARD BOND *Royal Court*

WHEN ALL around were losing their heads over Bond's **Saved** back in 1965 — 'concocted opportunity for vicarious beastliness', 'was there ever a psychopathic exercise so lovingly dwelt on as this?', etc, etc, etc, — Penelope Gilliatt of the *Observer* managed to keep hers triumphantly in place Her review of the play was as eloquent as Tynan's of *Look Back in Anger* a decade earlier, an appreciation powered by high-octane passion and hard, driving intelligence — and yet, when I once questioned Bond himself about it, he became curiously hedging and iffy. Was that an example of the cussedness of which he accuses himself in the current Court programme? Back then I suspected so, but time and reflection have changed my mind. Everything about Mrs Gilliatt's analysis was right except for one thing, which unluckily happened to be what made Bond write the play in the first place. She talked of individual fear, confusion, stupidity, brutishness; he wanted to attribute all that, and more, to the brutishness of the ruling classes, the stupidity of the system.

For him, the terrible act of victimisation at the play's centre, the stoning-to-death of that baby in that pram, is perpetrated by people who themselves are victims, because they're victims. Their violence is the consequence of institutionalised violence. The murder, Bond has said, is 'not done by thugs, but by people who like plays condemning thugs'. More sensible audiences should leave the theatre trying to 'understand all the pressures that went into the making of that tragedy', and, having understood, being 'so strongly moved as to want to take action'. But when the most sympathetic, most responsive of his original critics failed to see something so obvious to him, what was he to think and do? His subsequent work has provided the answer: spell out rather than suggest, italicise rather than hint, argue directly rather than embody argument in action. Bond the artist has evolved into Bond the didact, and you can see why. It is, he thinks, the way to be effective.

Mark you, one can hardly blame Mrs Gilliatt for her omission. Back in 1965, our antennae were less attuned to denunciations of society either explicit or implicit, and Bond did remarkably little to help us adjust or redirect them. Not one member of the oppressor class ventures into *Saved*, not a policeman nor a magistrate nor even a social worker or educator. Apart from a TV that rattles on unwatched and a jukebox that briefly squawks out mindless love-songs, there's no sense of any larger world enclosing and defining the bleak, mean South-London pit into which we're plunged throughout the evening. It's left to us to piece together the play's social algebra, deducing cause and effect where none may be immediately apparent. Why do the young killers talk of work, women, everything that's potentially of value, with such boredom and contempt? Where were they brought up if not in houses very like the one we see grimly inhabited by the baby's mother and her parents, with their pettiness and greed and apathy and unending mutual hatred? What shapes such households, such families? How can so many people be so deprived if someone, something, somewhere, is not depriving them?

Few could see *Saved* without asking at least some of these questions. But even fewer could push all of them to Bond's preferred conclusions without foreknowledge of his political thinking as it's since been codified in his plays and prefaces, essays and interviews and poems. And one could say much the same of the slightly earlier **Pope's Wedding**. On the face of it, that's a sort of pastoral preview of *Saved* itself. It presents us with East Anglian labourers only a little less stunted, stingy and vengeful than their urban cousins; it has a strikingly similar protagonist, a young man not yet as lacking in curiosity, generosity and warmth as his mates. Scopey, as he's called, tries to befriend the local hermit, much as Len befriends the baby's dim, balky mother and her two warring parents in *Saved*. But there the likeness stops. Len doggedly endures snubs and insults, rudeness and ingratitude: Scopey's interest in the old recluse becomes obsessive and eventually destructive, though quite why he ends by killing him is by no means clear. Presumably it's because he's in an agony of frustration, having failed to achieve something whose extreme rarity Bond's title wryly recognises. Fulfilling relationships occur about as often as Popes' weddings in the dismal world 'they' have constructed for us.

But how many of those coming innocent to the Court could work that out for themselves? Certainly, neither Danny Boyle's direction of *Pope* nor Max Stafford-Clark's of *Saved* will give them much help interpreting either play. And that's not because the productions are bad, but because they're very good. Never for a moment do Tony Rohr, Joanne Whalley, Peter-Hugo Daly and the rest of the company give us the feeling we're being uncomfortably nudged towards some social or political point-of-view. Always we're in the presence of life itself, coolly observed and unsentimentally chronicled, precisely the way Bond would seem to have wanted it back in the 1960s. Indeed, I noticed just one alteration to the fabric of either play, the substitution of 'he' and 'his' for 'it' and 'its' when the baby is being glumly discussed halfway through *Saved*. In the original, only a single monosyllable, casually dropped elsewhere in the text, reveals that the poor creature isn't actually the inanimate object, the identityless *thing*, everyone seems to think him. But that's a small liberty, and anyway does nothing to help us read Bond's mind.

But Bond wanted his mind read then, and wants it read even more now, since he's increasingly come to believe that the playwright must also be a prophet, worthless unless he's inspiring his audiences to confront and conquer the deadly injustices all around them. Thus it is that the career that began with *Saved* and *Pope* has now arrived at *The Bundle*, *The Worlds* and *Summer*, plays where the ideology is often more apparent than the observation — and, indeed, ideology sometimes seems to dictate observation. Blend all three into one, and you could leave the theatre thinking that the boss classes were simultaneously clownish, blatantly venomous and pathetically weak, and that years of oppression had done little or nothing to lessen their wage-slaves' essential decency, their serfs' capacity to create. *Saved* and *The Pope's Wedding* make that seem naive and self-indulgent. They also make such as *The Worlds* seem preachy and pontificating.

Yet Bond's development is instructive, because it raises question after question of principle, relevant to playwright after playwright. How far is it proper for a 'committed' writer to present his audiences with the evidence, then withdraw and leave them to decide its meaning for themselves? How much, how far dare he risk misinterpretation? How much can he himself intrude without distorting or destroying the very thing that makes his interpretation credible, namely a sense of life? How is he to avoid an abject surrender to aestheticism on the one hand, a withering and shrivelling into propaganda on the other? How much, how far can he reconcile art and instruction, those age-old adversaries that perhaps shouldn't and needn't be adversaries at all? How, in short, make a *Saved* as clear as a *Worlds* — and a *Worlds* as true as a *Saved*? □

DANCE

Lettered

Stephanie Jordan

YOU CAN'T get away from **The Nutcracker** this Christmas, on stage or on the box (where Scottish Ballet did it). Yet versions differ widely; nobody can tell you the story satisfactorily — there's this German Christmas party with children and an old magician with one eye who gives Clara a nutcracker shaped like a soldier who goes to battle with a Mouse King then transports the little girl to the Kingdom of Sweets wherein she is entertained by Sugar Plum Fairy and cohorts. . .Stories of other ballet classics are sketchy but none as inconsequential as this.

Peter Wright's *Nutcracker* arrives at Covent

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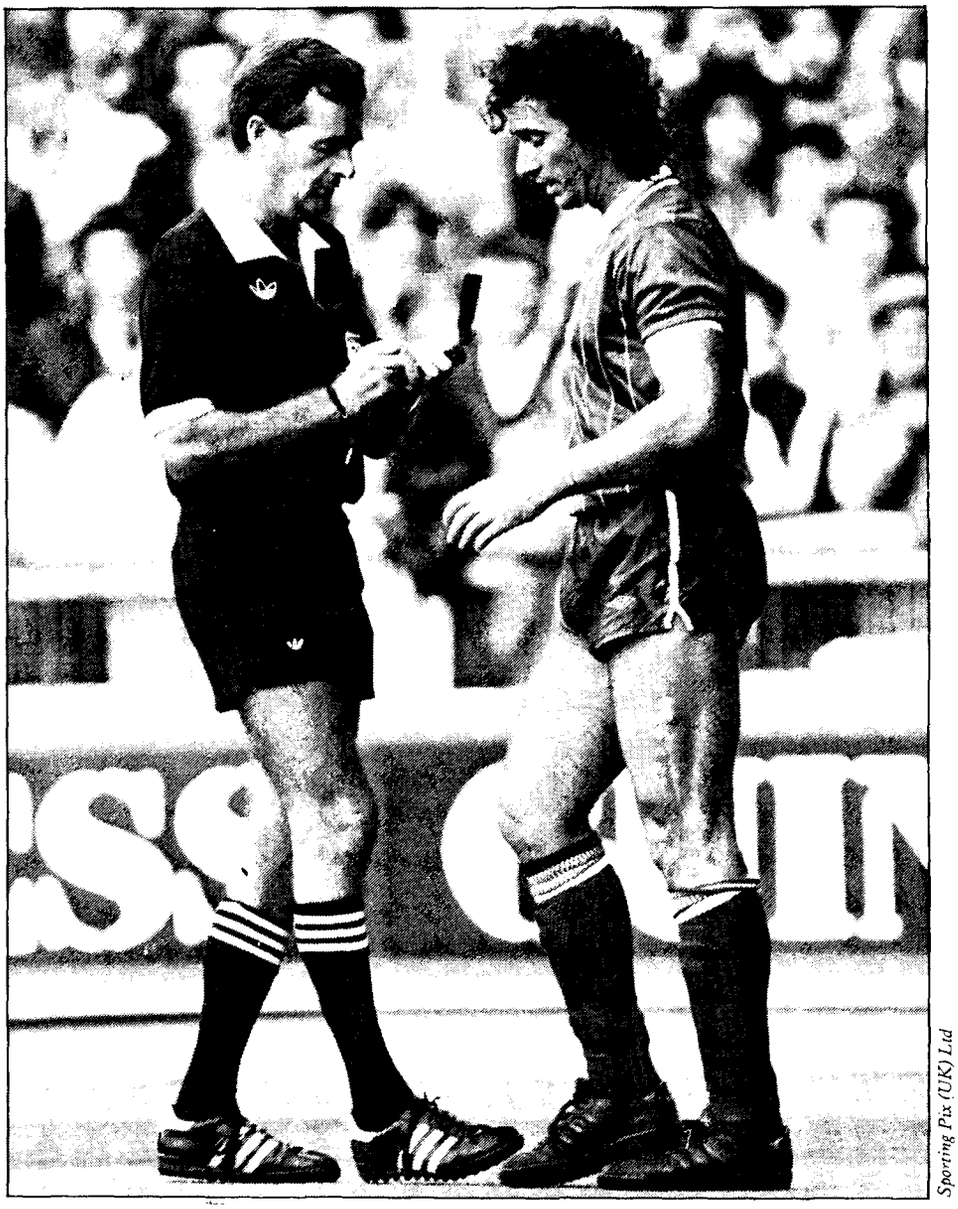
Garden with the support of learned articles by Professor Roland John Wiley, an exhibition at the Bethnal Green Museum and a wealth of details from his designer Julia Trevelyan Oman on the Nuremburg of E.T.A. Hoffmann, the fairytale's author. More than simply a new production, this is an attempt to remove generations of confused reinterpretations of a dramatically unsound work and restore the letter of the story rather than invent solutions. As much as possible of the Ivanov/Sergueyev choreography is included.

The work's structure offers the production *impasse* of linking a first-act reality with a second-act fantasy: a Christmas party and a child's dream. In a more commonplace version — Ronald Hynd's 1976 rethink for Festival Ballet on show at RFH — Clara is joined in her dreams by a sister Louise who becomes the romantic lead. Clara takes to the Kingdom of Sweets images from the party: toys, costumes and presents coming to life.

At the RB, half of Tchaikovsky's Overture is employed to depict Drosselmeyer's workshop in which hangs the portrait of a young man who turns out to be a bewitched nephew, cast as an ugly nutcracker by rodent forces of darkness. The apotheosis, always a problem (Petipa's original libretto demands an unaccountable beehive buzzing), is here used to show the nephew fulfilling Drosselmeyer's hopes, returned to the workshop in human form, redeemed, meanwhile, by Clara's love for the ugly toy. With his mission, Drosselmeyer assumes the central role. He still possesses supernatural powers but is now a serious and loving family retainer.

Outstanding in the production is the counterpoint of domestic activity in the Biedermeyer Act I, the representatives of several generations filling the stage. There is a magnificent transformation as Clara shrinks to the size of the Nutcracker doll and the toys, mice, windows and, most spectacularly, the candle-lit tree become huge. After the battle of mice versus toys, in which the Mouse King is dispatched, Clara and Nutcracker are whisked by ornamental angels into a Christmas tree forest where human-size snowflakes dance and swirl. The ensuing Act II decor is a reasonable device for harmonising suggestions of icing sugar and marzipan with costumes for assorted Chinese, Arabian, Spanish, Old Russian and floral dancers.

Convincing though the tale now seems, and for all the diligence of its creators, Wright's virtuoso handling of forces and the achievement of those concerned in an astonishing piece of stagecraft, adherence to the intellectual task has somehow robbed *Nutcracker* of gaiety, rendering it ponderous, as if all that reading-room delving has re-bourgeoisified a work that was threatening to become too popular. That was its effect on one adult; I imagine that the average infant balletomane would find much of it bewildering. Act II still fails, remaining piecemeal for too long, and Clara and the nephew are the barely visible audience to a *divertissement* taking place in ample space with gaps, stillnesses and little continuity between each dance. But it is worthy and conscientious, intricate and full of visual wonders. There will be plenty of opportunity to see it for many Christmases future. □



Sporting Pix (UK) Ltd

Ref-erence points

George Richey

THERE ARE three codes of football widely played in the United Kingdom; today the American Grid Iron game has yet to produce a significant number of players. In all three codes players transgress the laws and in both soccer and rugby there has been the usual crop of sendings-off this season. However, despite this similarity, there remains a major difference in the way in which soccer players conduct themselves when compared with rugby players. This difference is so marked that it can almost be described as fundamental; it relates to the way in which the players regard the authority of the referee.

The laws as to the authority of the referee during play are almost identically worded. In all three codes the referee is sole judge of fact and law. Yet constantly one sees 'on the box' top-class soccer players arguing with, gesticulating at or making loud comments about the referee following a decision, or indeed lack of a decision.

Too often in soccer, particularly at the top, when penalty kicks or free kicks in dangerous positions are awarded, there is a period between the time of the award and the kick being taken which is needlessly extended because the offending team is arguing or stationing itself illegally too close to the ball. This rarely happens in rugby. Why?

There are two reasons. One has to do with the laws of the game and the other with the referee. In rugby the referee has a weapon at his disposal which stops *any* hint of argument. Following a decision to award a free kick or penalty, if the offending side does not immediately retire ten metres from the place at which the kick has been awarded, the referee will award another kick, always a penalty, ten metres further on; that is to say ten metres nearer the goal posts of the offending team. This has the effect of stopping argument and restarting play with the minimum of delay.

Unfortunately, the soccer referee has no such weapon, but there is no question that if he did, the needless wasting of time following

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controversial awards would stop. This could only be to the general benefit of soccer.

There is, though, another reason why soccer referees appear to be regarded with a certain contempt by players. The rugby referee is usually a past player and, unlike in soccer, it is quite possible for a top-class rugby player to turn to the whistle and reach the heights of the refereeing world. In soccer referees have to start young to get to the top.

The point is that, even if a rugby referee has an off day, the players know that he has played rugby and often a good class of rugby. They therefore have respect for the man as well as for the referee. At all levels of rugby, at the end of the game, the referee is part of the affair. But so apart are soccer referees that when Clive Thomas, a soccer referee of international standing, officiated at his last League match in Bristol last season, the club asked permission to mark the occasion with a presentation and this was refused.

Can it be that this lack of respect for authority so prevalent on the soccer field spills over into the crowds off the field? Clearly the social make-up of the crowds cannot be the factor. Rugby League is basically a Northern game and its spectators are of the same social background as those who follow the kicking code. Rugby Union might in the past have been mainly a middle-class game — and that is questionable — but today it has a universal following, so class is not the reason for this difference of crowd behaviour.

What then of the actual make-up of the crowd? The rugby crowd consists of players, past players and their families. Thus, they have an identity with the game that non-player spectators might not have. Rugby Union and most Rugby League players are amateurs, hence they are in the same boat as those watching the game.

But, even in professional Rugby League, it seems that players still identify with their supporters in a way which soccer players do not. This must contribute to the lack of crowd violence at rugby matches.

But surely the obvious ill-discipline that many professional soccer players show in their lack of respect for the referees' decisions is a factor towards generating crowd violence? If so, the cure might not be in crowd control but in changing one of the laws of the kicking code. □

George Richey was a Grade 1 referee with the Army and Dorset and Wilts. Referees Societies. He has refereed 6 'B' level Internationals and is now an adjudicator with the North Midlands Referees Society.

Among this week's contributors:

ANNA COOTE is the co-author of *Sweet Freedom* (Picador, 1982).

BOB WOFFINDEN is currently working on a book about miscarriages of justice.

KEN WORPOLE's *Reading by Numbers: Contemporary Publishing and Popular Fiction* was published by Comedia last autumn.

ALAN BOLD's most recent book is an anthology of sporting verse, *The Poetry of Motion*, edited for Mainstream Publishing.

Naseem Khan

Real people

HUNDREDS of performers, a panoramic theme, a schedule so complicated that a computer has to be called in to sort it all out — this sounds more like a Hollywood spectacular rather than a community play. However, this is no common or garden community, no common and garden play. The 'community' is the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, with 136,000 inhabitants. The play was due to be developed in 12 different centres simultaneously, before being triumphantly brought together at Riverside Studios recently. It is reasonable to ask whether the end product of this gargantuan exercise could really qualify as a community play in the accepted sense of the words. What is the point of it? A feat certainly, but what more?

Hammersmith and Fulham's play, *Sideways Down*, is probably inevitable. Ann Jellicoe's whole-village community plays in Dorset have set an example already picked up by Leicester. And Riverside itself has unsatisfactorily tried to transplant a Jellicoe production. It was logical that they should try to do it themselves, particularly with Elisabeth Katis, Jellicoe's associate director, to hand.

It is impossible not to admire the organisation of it. For over a year amateur groups have been meeting week after week in youth clubs, adult education institutes, community centres, all having responded to the first flyposted invitation to participate in making a community play, and most of them new to theatre. Nor has it been a matter of speedy rewards. For the first six months and more, they never got a sniff of a text or a story. It was workshops in basic stagecraft with Elisabeth Katis and her associate Nick Bye, exercises in improvisation. Eventually, said Elisabeth Katis, her vast community cast was able to handle quite sophisticated improvisation and to criticise each other's work. It was in effect a crash course in acting; not acting as people tended at first to believe it should be — all mannerisms and display — but something more useful.

In March they acquired a writer, Elisabeth Bond (author of *Minor Complications* last summer at the Theatre Upstairs). The play she wrote did not emerge as directly as the delightful one Shirley Barrie wrote for Hackney's Chat's Palace (of which more later) written in response to a detailed scenario that had been devised collectively by the group. Elisabeth Bond spent time with all the groups. Then she and the two directors sat down and drew up a scenario that drew in as much material as possible from all the months of improvisation; it also brought in a theme they'd noticed in a local newspaper article — the idea of rubbish. A characteristic of Fulham, said Katis, the number of overflowing tips; and a characteristic of the borough at large, their cast agreed, where human beings counted as expendable bits of rubbish.

It is that simple expression of malaise that lies at the heart of Elisabeth Bond's skilful play: a common denominator beneath the range of experiences being offered to them. On that rather slight spine she constructed a play composed of mini-vignettes that range the borough from posh Palmer's Green to grotty White City, from office block to Palais, from hounded emigrés to down and outs. A true story runs through it (or some of it): young Dean nicks a wallet at work and is caught by the law just as he is winning a dance contest at the Palais. It is produced as a promenade performance in which the audience mills in the centre waiting to see on which of the surrounding four stages the action will next take place. (This is lively but hard on the feet.)

Much of it is very funny. Elisabeth Bond has a nice line in tart one-liners. 'Nobody was untouched by the Sixties,' says her super-annuated trendy pompously, while outside his well-heeled house the dossers pick over the local tip. Mothers despair of children, men exploit women, the old detest the new world — 'It's all blacks in Shepherds Bush'. In the most convincing section, images of locks projected on a large screen echo the action and tellingly evoke a sense of urban strain. But for all the good things in it, and for all the lovely direct quality Elisabeth Katis has got from her 150-odd cast, the disparities — between for instance angry squatters and super smoothies — cannot but be felt. There are just too many elements and too many insights to be contained on any but a skin-deep level.

Chat's Palace's *Sawdust* (the shaping of which I wrote about in the last *NS*) takes a different view of the community play, though there's no moral to be gained from that. *Sideways Down* is a panoramic patchwork play, a bird's-eye view of the borough made up from many lives. *Sawdust* instead consciously opts for an imaginary world.

Its set, which surrounds the audience, is wonderful. Above your head fly papier-maché pig trapezists. The walls glitter with fairground kitsch (all made in the backroom), a moveable mermaid, a crocodile that cries. The band are sheep in long johns, for *Sawdust* is set in a circus-fairground run by strange animals whose magical qualities are covetted by an ageing American film star, Ronald Rumpus. Ever more greedy, he steals their different types of beauty, with the help of the familiar evil scientist. But of course nemesis is waiting, as it has to in a Christmas show. *Sideways Down* ends on a minor note, with the appearance of a real rubbish van. *Sawdust* ends in triumph (though unfortunately achieved by super-natural rather than human means).

But the two shows do share some things. There's the visual look of the casts — indubitably real people (fat, thin, black, white) with none of that actors' patina. There's the directness of the playing; there's the absorption of local activities (kids' athletics and body-popping) conveniently into the fabric of the plays. But, above all, there's the sense of co-operation in an endeavour that gives both, different though they are, a quality that is hard to mistake. □

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TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

The price war

I WONDER did you sit staring at a bunch of unwrapped objects on Christmas Eve, trying to portion out your love to your family and friends in the most convincing way possible given the transparent tawdriness of the goods available? You had to look at that jumble-sale scarf from the point-of-view of your brother, who was coming over, then try and imagine how much it looked as if it cost and allot it accordingly. With an apology and a packet of cigarettes enclosed, your relationship might just survive until the next set-back: his birthday.

But then that's the essence of Christmas: springing your love on people from behind, having wrapped it beforehand, to assist the sense of ambush. It's pistols at dawn moved to mid-morning, with kisses for bullets. You take ten paces towards your loved one, then you offer each other a present, while relatives look on to see fair thanks and lipstick smears your cheek like a bullet crease. A tie! Touché! (Thank God it's not silk or wearable or anything, otherwise *The Young Ones Joke Book* is a definite face loser.) So long as ecstasy is seen to be expressed, honours will be equal. For what is being exchanged here is not books and tat, but face. It's a kind of plea-bargaining: I won't rumble your jumble sale if you promise not to expose my review copies.

In **The Price is Right** (ITV) — a kind of Christmas in microcosm — people's pre-Christmas apportioning skills are tested for cash in public. 'Come on down Julie Harrison, Loretta Williams, Kim Drabble' bellows host Leslie Crowther as those named push forward to exhibit their finely-tuned prowess at price-assessment. What Julie and co. have to do is divine the price of a 'soup tureen and set of servers'. Loretta comes to within £2 of a right guess and scores the tureen. 'Now, Loretta, how would you like to go home with all THESE things as well?' Loretta looks at the picnic basket, travelling rug, expresso coffee machine and novelty Micky Mouse phone and finds she is downwind of a happiness several hundred pounds superior to her existing one and goes for it like a border terrier down a foxhole, entering a — to me — impregnable section of the show entitled 'Supermarket', involving clocks, labels, numbers and shelf upon shelf of consumer unendurables, many of which Loretta puts in her picnic basket, becoming happier by the pound sterling and spreading the resulting secretion over our screens like processed cheese.

'Mike,' says Crowther, calling down the next contestant, 'this mini-snooker-table is made from polished wood and comes with a set of balls. Isn't it exciting?' Mike agrees that it is exciting. 'Have you got a table like this at home, Mike?' Mike says he has. 'Well, Mike,' says Crowther, 'now you have got another one, haven't you?' Again, Mike finds it hard not to agree with Crowther and feigns the kind of excessive servility that got him accepted on the show. As if he weren't already, Mike is invited to play 'The Money Game', another impregnable segment resembling the 'Open the Box!' interlude filmed by Hammer Horror. One glance at the Novelty Fruit Machine, Upright Freezer, Hi-Fi-Pizza-Maker-cum-TV-Barbecue-and-Radio-Grill-Timer and the audience have to be given cattle sedatives to prevent them stampeding the podium and impaling themselves on the three-piece glass-and-brass occasional table which seems to open like a Venus fly-trap whenever their friends drop round for cocktails.

It is now Alan's turn to select three items *not* worth the 'Danger Price' of £185. (Christmas veterans will recognise this 'danger price' as the one which shoots you dead on Christmas morning.) He sees the gifts passing before his eyes like a man drowning in Christmas, but fails to grab any. Bubbles rise from his mouth as immaterialism stares him in the face.

It seems *The Price is Right* has been away for a while. However, 'we're back now and what's more we're going to be with you well into next summer...' Crowther isn't afraid of the dreaded off-season because he knows that on game shows it is Christmas every day of the year. In Britain there are 11 Christmasses a week. That's nothing. In the States there are 18 a day. If you give up work and take to drink and drugs you can live all your life baying at game-shows in the comfort of your own home, the way most Americans do. 'If the Golden Doors open you will have won your Dream House,' says your dream host. The Golden Doors inch apart and recipients Tracy and Don wet themselves in unison to the baying of a million Californians: 'For days afterwards we were walking on air. You'd achieved something. You'd won a Dream House!'

Come On Down, as befits BBC-1, was second-degree game time. A sort of Barry Norman as Clive James on Television, in which our bloodhound attended an audition for some of the hopefuls who queue for hours every day to be pilloried for cash on West Coast game shows. 'Have your social security card and your driver's license together in the same hand,' yelled the doorman. Those who got through the initial vetting — for criminals, lunatics and depressives (the vast majority), as well as anyone wearing glasses — were interviewed three at a time by Mr Big. 'What I'm looking for is someone in a party mood,' he confides to Barry. 'Anyone about ready to explode with the party factor. I want to see a person so excited on stage that a tear comes to their eye.' He is not disappointed by most candidates, who would willingly secrete a different fluid from every pore if it meant a chance at the jackpot, and often do.

The programme dug up an engaging Chicano game-show veteran called Diego Domingo, who said he had made a study of shows, made videos, pumped himself full of health drinks and vitamins and borrowed money for clothes. He held up a little book he believed in, called *Dress for Success*, and showed his striped tie, blazer and brogues laid out. 'I got my Dress for Success Outfit,' he told us. 'When I walk in there I'm gonna look like a New York Banker.' Diego looked like a comedy Fu Manchu, but he was just about on to himself, I thought, if such is possible in America. He demonstrated for our benefit the right and wrong way to answer the question 'What is two plus two?' on a game-show. The 'right' answer — 'FOUR?!!!!?', not 'Four?' — looked certifiable, but Diego has never won a penny on a game show and has now lost his job to them.

In one Fifties show, 'Queen for a Day', now revived, winners got to be sort of mini-celebrities just so long as they could stay awake. One old queen — 'It was so *special*' — remembered being taken to The Beachcomber, where she spotted Clark Gable, who promptly choked on his 'Zombie'. The queen dashed over with a drink of water and clapped the King on the back. This was so 'special' that Gable had to dance with her. As Diego pointed out, 'The game show is the common man's Olympics. If TV is our religion, the game show is the altar and our salvation is a Mayteg Washer' — sentiments which seemed to capture the very spirit of Our Saviour's birthday as enshrined in the American Constitution: Happiness by the pound! Grab some now! My own favourite show is the one where contestants strip one another nude for money. How about one called 'Prostitution', in which money, sex and household appliances are shown to be interchangeable, as in all good Christian countries and game shows? □

Weekend competition

No 2854 **Set by Snubbin**

'Almost everyone I know published a good book this year,' wrote Clive James at the end of the one that's just over. Effortlessly superior, but hardly subtle. Readers are asked for up to 150 words of prose in which the writer altogether more obliquely and less coarsely implies his or her transcendent human status. By 16 January please.

No 2851 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Official statements making famous defeats sound like victories.

Report **By Di Dact**

Were it not for a ruthless percussion in the temples and layers of grit behind the eyelids, not to mention dehydration, a disintegrating liver and a buzzing in the ears that first set in at the Complex Christmas Party (of which, let no more be said) — were it not for the above, I might hector you on the need for leaves to be turned over; socks pulled up; resolutions made. As it is, the thought of so much movement makes me want to curl up and expire, so I'll simply point out that re-writing Dunkirk to make it sound like a victory (an option for which more than one of you plumped) was not the most original idea. Ten pounds apiece to the few, hereunder, who splendidly overcame the seasonal hazards. Oh, and a word to Master Cowley: be extremely thankful that The Headmistress does not, as yet, subscribe to the Droitwich *Trumpet*. The November issue is likely not to have amused Her.

After a protracted bout of negotiations at the Hastings summit, we have agreed with our French neighbours the following extremely advantageous

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terms. King Guillaume will take over the management of our state superstructure — legal system, land rights, monarchy, etc. — and will of course pay full administrative costs thereof. In return he has given a solemn undertaking that our Anglo-Saxon heritage will remain intact: every churl will have an absolute right to remain a churl in perpetuity. Furthermore, our linguistic integrity will be respected; migrants from across the channel will have the disadvantage of using a foreign language. In areas where linguistic cross-fertilisation is deemed inevitable (e.g. agricultural policy) a sensible compromise states that domestic animals will continue to be cows, sheep, pigs, etc., while their meat will henceforth be known as *boeuf, mouton, porc*, etc. This *in no way* reflects any unfair distribution of labour or privileges.

PETER NORMAN

Well, gents, today you seen a fight what's gotta go down in pre-history as the Slamming in Ephes-Dammin. But what you gotta realise is that a boy who weighs in at 6 cubits and a span and around 5,000 skekels of brass — and that's just his coat of mail — aint never gonna be no ballet dancer. And the kid he met today (all right, he hadn't done a lot previous) but he's out the same stable as Moses and Joshua and when was the last time Jehova was corner man for a bum of the month? Getting killed could be the best thing that ever happened to our boy. He needed the experience. And I tell you, soon as we've prised the stone out of his forehead you're gonna see a faster fitter Philistine. And a future heavyweight champion of Judea. We wanna rematch.

CHRIS BOND

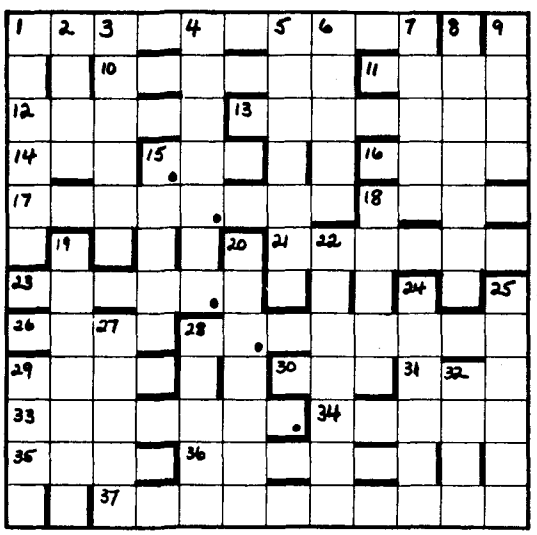
The new Trojan government today announced its major plans, following the successful expulsion of the Greeks from our shores. The war has allowed us to undertake the major building programme for so long postponed, including the destruction of the old city gates to make way for a brand new entrance. The government is already hard at work on creating the facilities required for our hard-won new industry of tourism — for Troy, so long in the shadow, is now firmly on the map. Historic ruins have already been listed and grants will be available to pull down any stones left standing in an unsightly fashion. Books are already in preparation about the ten-year festival which has so recently come to a close. And while the Greeks go home to be murdered in their baths and beds — that's if they *get* home! — we can all work together like Trojans to make it Troy, Troy and Troy Again!

WILL BELLENGER

Salamanca 90

'Split Infinity'

PRIZES: £25 cheques for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 90, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 29 January.



A quotation beginning at 1 Down, reading through to 36 Across, and ending with the word at 37, is obtained by [illegible] to thirty-six clues before entry, these clues containing definitions of full words and indications of final versions. Five normal clues lead to answers which must have one letter misprinted, the misprint caused by crossing answers. Within the completed grid may be found the classic example of the alternative title; this, the quotation, the misprinted answers and the dotted squares are all linked.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

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Note: The solution and prizewinners to Crossword 1464 will appear next week in our 11 January issue.

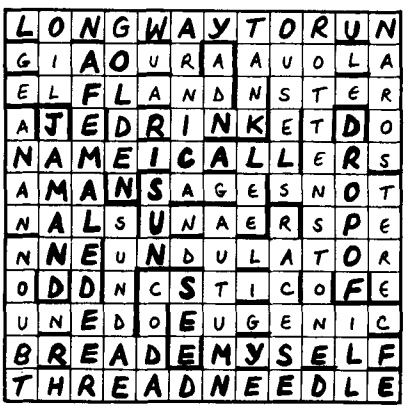
DOWN

1 'Harmonious' chap, Sir, butting in: an unimportant person (7)
2 Shrine from the mysterious past (5)
3 Nasty sore (this contains liquid inside): one with many such would be! (6)
4 Preparation for sale in which mad changes with end of stock now are seen (8)
5 Big chemical firm involved in business turns opened to ordinary people (8)
6 One found in one's tips (6)
7 Safe local anesthetic will put one under soundly you see (6)
8 Notorious insect wielding a signalling device? (8)
9 Glue for mending craft (5)
15 Something of a breeze? Not half! Is that so? (6)
18 Soothe old one, cold and pretending modesty (5)
19 One in the Sea, compact and rocky? (8)
20 Clay bust and pedestal mostly framed with tile arrangement (8)
22 This could produce halt in company (pedal) (8)
24 Rare gig for Frenchy (7)
25 Beat again with a stick a tree's provided (7)
27 Nervous disease, part of the daily routine (6)
28 New cadet to move to another section (6)
29 Tables showing what stands for square root in Planck dividing? (5)
32 Of which some show hospitality (5)

ACROSS

1 When a missile explodes army retreats inside, converted (11)
10 Tea with foreign bread, short thin foreign bread (8)
11 Gloomy person turning a bit lack-lustre (4)
12 Hair as straw standing up on end? (If on punk it could be one!) (5)
13 Fuel in blocks: cutting a lot, I see carbon content (8)
14 Miserable person wept in Aberdeen (4)
15 What's important in wine leaving a round stain (5)
16 Floor plant (5)
17 Aristo's false without right articulation (9)
18 Scots benefit society issuing new periodical outside (6)
21 See Roman's wearing covering: sweaty? (7)
23 See a sand-eeel that's strong, if old (7)
26 Resin-hard dart (5)
28 Gnarly old tree around edge of forest, past blooming (9)
29 Priest with innate touch of handling (a diplomatic minister) (5)
30 Rank shot leading with heart (5)
31 This has edible flowers round what surrounds Mac's garden? (4)
33 Poorer societies lacking all energy in indifference (8)
34 Jock's joints keep close to edges of hindquarters (6)
35 Dismissal with the boot in the old fashion (4)
36 The agitator's no heart for conformity, no longer agreeing (8)
37 See above (11)

Solution to Salamanca 88

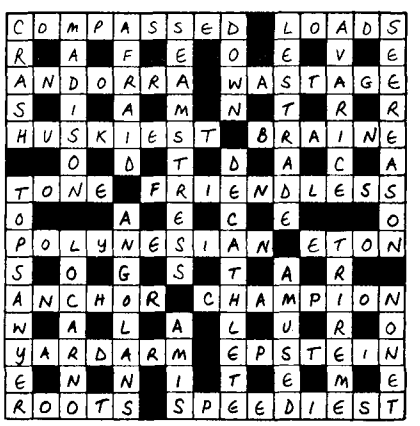


Notes do, re, ray, me, mi, fah, fa, so, sol, lah, la, te, ti, do were removed, and given their Julie Andrews counterparts, as in *The Sound of Music*. (NB la given dictionary definition.)

Prizewinners to Salamanca 88

Ron Hunter (Glasgow)
Miss M. Parberry (Pinner, Middx)
Myra Stokes (Clifton, Bristol)

Solution to 1463



Prizewinners to 1463

Michael Crum (Oxford)
A. Jones (Shrewsbury)
A.H. Partridge (Horsham, Sussex)

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City of Manchester

Policy and Strategy Liaison Officer

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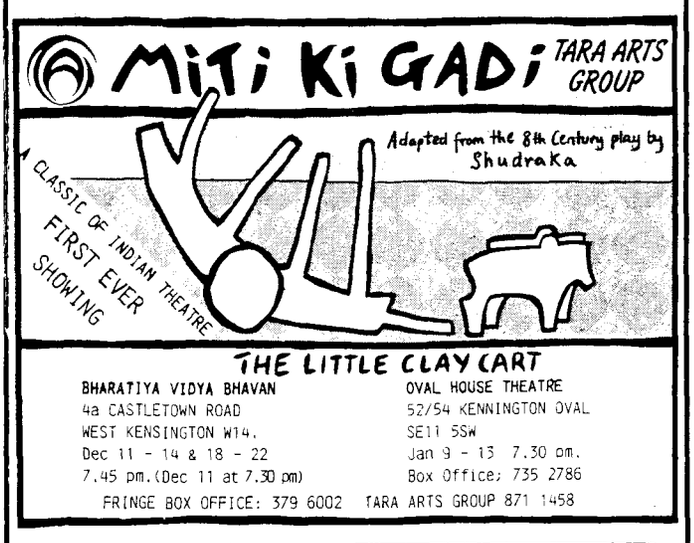
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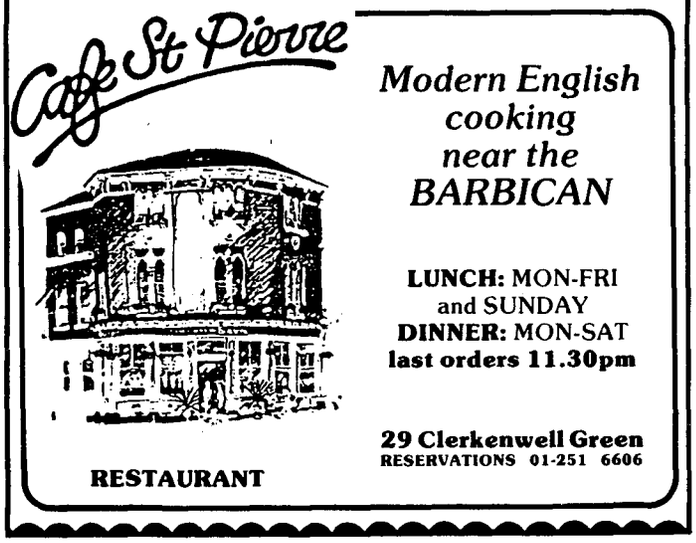

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